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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned hereby certify that they have read and recommend to the School of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "A Study of Children's Prose Written in England 1780-1900" submitted by Eunice H. Hanna in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines children's prose literature written in England between 1780 and 1900. The period is divided into two parts, the first covering the years 1780 - 1830, and the second 1830 - 1900. Before beginning the study proper, there is a brief introductory survey of books written for young people prior to 1780. The thesis then proceeds to examine children's prose from 1780 to 1830 through characteristic works by Anna Laetitia Barbauld, John Aikin, Sara Trimmer, Mary Wollstonecraft, Thomas Day, Maria Edgeworth, and Mary Martha Sherwood. From this study emerge the main features which distinguish the children's books of this half-century from later literature for children. The first of these features is a predominant didactic note, with instruction being extended to include morals, manners, religion, and factual information. A second feature concerns the attitude of adults to children. Children are regarded as unquestionably inferior to adults. Childhood itself is devoted to preparation for adulthood. Standards of behaviour are high and discipline is strict, the parent or tutor requiring the child's complete submission to him in all matters. Another feature is the presentation of adults in general as superior and rather humourless beings who take life -- and themselves -- very seriously. In addition, there is a strong religious note in many of the books. One observes, finally, a notable lack of variety in the literature of 1780 - 1830, most of it dealing in a matter-of-fact way with everyday family life.

The general characteristics of this didactic literature



having been established, an explanation is sought in the prevailing literary, religious, economic, and educational movements. Since, however, these various social movements were dynamic, with change begetting change, action developing reaction, they are surveyed as a whole with regard to their influence on children's literature over the entire period treated in this thesis, that is, from 1780 to 1900. Where, for example, one finds the attitude to life in general associated with the neoclassic age is to a large degree responsible for the didacticism in children's literature from 1780 to 1830, the development of romanticism, which in part may be regarded as a reaction to neoclassicism, works for literature that is more imaginative in approach. So, too, the newer educational theories that were developing in the eighteenth century but did not really make themselves felt until the nineteenth are seen as forces working gradually for the ultimate liberation of this children's literature from didacticism.

This more imaginative, more indulgent children's literature is then examined as it first appears, if to a limited extent, in the realistic family stories of such authors as Catherine Sinclair, whose Holiday House was published in 1839, and in the adventure stories of such writers as Captain Marryat, whose Masterman Ready was published in 1841. The increasing freedom from the restraints of didacticism is noted in the unfettered fantasy of Lewis Carroll and George Macdonald and the hilarious freedom of Rudyard Kipling's public school story. The study of the books of these and other



authors reveals an increasing emphasis on entertainment value and a decreasing preoccupation with religious matters. One finds an attitude to children which mirrors that of the public in general, and there is a growing tendency to characterize adults more realistically and more appealingly. Finally, there is a notable increase in the variety of literature offered to children.





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1780-1900

A DISSERTATION

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## PREFACE

The importance of children's literature in England today is apparent in the fact that in 1952 it ranked third in the number of books published that year. Some publishing firms devote themselves entirely to this field, and many authors write for the children's market alone. Publishers and authors, however, were not always so concerned. In fact, children's literature as a recognized and exploited genre had its beginning only in the latter part of the eighteenth century, juvenile books before that time being comparatively few in number and, for the most part, decidedly mediocre in quality. About 1780, however, a concerted attack was made upon the children's market by both authors and publishers, and with the publication of Mrs. Barbauld's Hymns in Prose for Children in 1781 an era of continuous and enthusiastic writing for children began. Since that date children's literature has been produced in a steadily increasing volume, until today not only does it constitute a considerable part of literature in general, but its best books rank with the best in adult literature.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the prose written in England specifically for children during the years from 1780 to 1900, a span which covers the main development of what might be called modern literature. (By the twentieth century the general pattern had been set although new developments in such things as format and illustration were yet to come.) The period is, of course, treated in all histories of children's literature but, as is perhaps necessary in a historical survey, the treatment is rather brief



and limited. In the following pages I have endeavoured to examine in some detail characteristic children's books of this period and to account for the changes which occur.





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CHAPTER ONE

THE EARLY YEARS



## THE EARLY YEARS

The first books which were specifically addressed to young people were the books of courtesy. These were manuals of manners which grew initially out of the needs of both the chivalric society of the Middle Ages and the increasing merchant class which was aspiring to better things in the way of culture.<sup>1</sup> The earlier books of courtesy appeared first as manuscripts since at that time printing had not been introduced into England. Some of these, however, were later issued in print by Caxton and his successors.<sup>2</sup> A testimonial to the continuing popularity of this type of literature is seen in the fact that books of courtesy continued to be written during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>3</sup> Some of the more famous of these include The Babees Book, The Book of Curtesie That is Clepid Stans Puer ad Mensam, and The Lytylle Childrenes Lytil Boke or Edylllys Be. Two of the later books, which were intended as much for adults as for children, are John Russell's Boke of Nurture and Hugh Rhodes' Boke of Nurture.<sup>4</sup>

The didacticism of these books is their outstanding feature. All that is necessary to convince one of this fact is to glance at a few of them. For example, here is a stanza chosen at random from Stans Puer ad Mensam:

Of breed with thi teeth no soppis thou make;  
Lowde for to soupe is agen gentilnes:  
With mouth enbrowide thi cuppe thou not take,  
In ale ne in wiyne with hond leue no fatnes;  
Defoule not the naprie bi no richelesnes.  
Be waar that at the mete thou bigynne no striif;  
Thi teeth also at the table picke with no knyfe.<sup>5</sup>



The Babees Book, after a few stanzas of introduction, plunges immediately into the business at hand:

Whenne yee entre into your lordis place,  
Say first, "god spede;" And alle that ben byfore  
Yow in this stede, salve withe humble Face;  
Stert nat Rudely; komme Inne an esy pace;  
Holde vp youre heede, and knele but on oone kne  
To youre sovereyne or lorde, whedir he be.<sup>6</sup>

The Lytylle Childrenes Lytil Boke<sup>7</sup> follows much the same pattern, as do the Boke of Nurture, written by Hugh Rhodes, and John Russell's book of the same name. They are all obviously bent on bringing up young people in the way they should go.

There may be some question as to whether the books of courtesy have any place in a study of leisure-time reading. Certainly their purpose is to teach, and their content suggests that in all probability they formed the basis of many a private lesson in the nursery. On the other hand, as far as can be determined, they belonged to no established school curriculum. Furthermore, the authors seem to show some concern with the pleasure of their readers -- a concern not generally shared by the writers of textbooks at that time.<sup>8</sup> Most of the books of courtesy are written in poetic form, rhyme having been recognized as pleasing to the ear, as well as an aid to memory. There is in addition an occasional suggestion by authors that their work will find favour with young readers. One such comment appears toward the end of The Lytylle Childrenes Lytil Boke:

And therfore, chyldren, for charyte,  
Louyth this boke though yt lytil be!<sup>9</sup>





Therefore it would seem fair to include the books of courtesy as leisure reading while recognizing their limited appeal.<sup>10</sup>

There is one famous book of courtesy which has an undisputed title to being considered entertaining, a treatise entitled The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry. Written by a French knight of Anjou in 1371-2, it was translated into English in 1484 by William Caxton, but the version which has been published by the Early English Text Society, and which is here quoted, is the work of an anonymous translator who wrote some time earlier than Caxton.<sup>11</sup> Geoffroy de la Tour-Landry wrote it for his three motherless daughters,

wherupon thei might rede and studie, to that  
entent that thei might lerne and see bothe  
good and euell of the tyme passed, and forto  
kepe hem in good clenness, and from all euell  
in tyme comyng.<sup>12</sup>

It stresses the importance of such things as prayer, fasting, meek and courteous behaviour, obedience to one's husband, and chastity. It warns against feeding animals on fine food when people are poor and hungry, against being late for Mass, against failing to wear one's best clothes on Holy days, against being first to adopt new fashions in clothes, and against using any artificial means to improve one's beauty. Although instruction is its keynote, it is made interesting for leisure reading by the knight's use of examples to illustrate the various precepts.<sup>13</sup> To each suggestion which the knight makes as to the behaviour of his daughters is attached a story which is usually quite interesting. Obviously it would be no hardship to read such a book as this.



The next books to be written for English youngsters were the "good Godly books" of the seventeenth century -- or as they were sometimes called, "hell-fire books".<sup>14</sup> Again didacticism was the dominant note, although a somewhat different type of didacticism. This time it was religious teaching which motivated the authors. One of the most famous of the "good Godly books" was written by the Puritan clergyman, James Janeway, in 1671-2. Its full title is A Token for Children: being an Exact Account of the Conversion, Holy and Exemplary Lives, and Joyful Deaths of several young Children. According to May Hill Arbuthnot:

There were thirteen good little children in this gloomy book, and, considering their lives, it is small wonder that they died young. They spent their time trying to reform, convert, and generally improve everyone they encountered. They brooded on sin and eternal torment and the state of their souls. If these poor, priggish children had not died briskly of "a decline" or "the Plague," you would think that some of the "sinners" they wrestled with might have exterminated them in self-defense.<sup>15</sup>

This estimate is a modern one, but even allowing for the difference between modern and seventeenth-century standards, it must be admitted that the book is singularly lacking in any spirit of fun. The children spend a good deal of time weeping; and they obviously prefer praying to playing, the latter being looked upon as an unfortunate weakness to which most children have a natural inclination.<sup>16</sup> Any pleasure which a child might have derived from such a book would depend upon a well-developed sensitivity to things spiritual. If he had been brought up in a devout Puritan family, he might well



have experienced a real physical and mental ecstasy. No doubt the author intended to give such keen, spiritual pleasure to readers, but foremost in his thoughts was obviously the wish to save souls and to lead young people to live a good life in accordance with Puritan standards.

Lesser lights among the religious writers for children during the seventeenth century include Thomas White, whose Little Book for Little Children is composed of rather grisly accounts of martyrdom;<sup>17</sup> Abraham Chear, whose specialty was poetry;<sup>18</sup> and John Bunyan, whose contribution to the younger generation took the form of a book of verse -- A Book for Boys and Girls; or, Country Rhimes for Children,<sup>19</sup> a work far less popular with them than his adult Pilgrim's Progress.<sup>20</sup>

Still in the "good Godly" tradition, but somewhat later than the works just mentioned, came the Reverend Isaac Watts, with his Divine and Moral Songs for Children (1715).<sup>21</sup> Here was a man who had a better idea of how to please children, but the message which his poetry conveys is still frankly religious and moral. In the preface to his Songs, he states:

There is a great delight in the very learning of truths and duties this way. There is something so amusing and entertaining in rhymes and metre, that will incline children to make this part of their business a diversion.<sup>22</sup>

While the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were busily producing such triumphantly moral literature for children,





there was flowing along in the background an ever-increasing stream of chapbooks. In the chapbooks children could find pleasure without didacticism, for there were among them such favourites as the old romances of Sir Guy and Sir Bevis, Dick Whittington, and the story of the children in the wood.<sup>23</sup> That children did read them would seem probable judging by the references found in the literature of the day. Bunyan in the seventeenth century deplored his youthful fondness for them. Steele and Sterne suggest their popularity in the early eighteenth century. Boswell enumerates quite a number of titles which were his favorites about the middle of the century, and Coleridge and Wordsworth also refer to the Arabian Nights and certain romances as boyhood reading.<sup>24</sup> Although only Sterne clearly implies that the chapbooks were generally popular ~~at~~ with youngsters, it seems fair to assume that budding authors were not the only ones who read chapbook literature.<sup>25</sup>

It is important to note, however, that as far as can be determined very few of the chapbooks were written expressly for children<sup>26</sup> until on into the nineteenth century;<sup>27</sup> and, although publishers must have been aware of their juvenile public, they apparently made no concessions to it. The fact that the tastes of children frequently coincided with those of the lower and lower-middle classes for whom the chapbooks were intended must have been accepted as a happy coincidence. The few little books which were obviously written for children were usually of the established moral character and rather poor attempts. Such a one is The Children's Example,



in which a little girl is tempted by the devil to forget about going to school and to learn instead the vices of lying, cursing, and swearing from her companions. With commendable fortitude the lass dismisses the Devil:

Satan avoid hence out of Hand  
In name of JESUS I command!  
At which the Devil instantly  
In flames of Fire away did fly.<sup>28</sup>

An exception to the decidedly didactic reading matter which fell to the lot of children appeared first in France toward the end of the seventeenth century. This exception was the little volume of fairy tales by Charles Perrault<sup>29</sup> which appeared in the salons and in the court of France. Whether or not it may be justly included with books written for children is something of a problem, for its appearance in print was the result of the adult popularity accorded to fairy tales in general at this time. And indeed most of the fairy tales which delighted the court were obviously adult in their sophistication. But surely Charles Perrault was thinking more of young readers than adult ones when he published his Histoires ou Contes du temps passé; avec des Moralitez, in spite of the occasional touches of adult humour in which he indulges. For one thing, on the frontispiece is the picture of an old woman surrounded by three children<sup>30</sup> to whom she is obviously telling the fairy tales; furthermore, the language of the tales is the simple language of the nurse to her small charges. In any case, there can be no doubt that when the tales were translated into English -- probably in 1729<sup>31</sup> --



they were immediately popular with a juvenile public.<sup>32</sup> They included such permanent contributions to the store of children's literature as "Little Red Riding Hood", "Sleeping Beauty," "Puss-in-Boots," "Toads and Diamonds," "Hop o' My Thumb," and Cinderella." And it is especially worth noting that the tales themselves were all innocent of a conscious desire to improve the minds and morals of their readers.<sup>33</sup>

One of the first, certainly one of the most successful, publishers to establish a definite market for children's books<sup>34</sup> in the eighteenth century was John Newbery. Newbery is one of the important names in any history of the development of children's literature in England. He had a genuine liking for little people, a liking which appears throughout his publications, not only in their gay bindings and careful workmanship, but also in the cheerful and jovial spirit which pervades their pages. He was too good a business man, however, to ignore the fact that parents would be responsible to a large extent for the success of his venture. The title page of the first little book for children, which he published in 1744, gives a fair idea of the studied appeal to children and parents which appears in all his "lilliputians."

A little Pretty Pocket-Book Intended for the Instruction and Amusement of Little Master Tommy, and Pretty Miss Polly. With Two Letters from Jack the Giant-Killer; As also a Ball and a Pincushion; The Use of which will infallibly make Tommy a good Boy and Polly a good Girl. To which is added, A Little Song-Book, Being a New Attempt to teach Children the Use of the English Alphabet, by Way of Diversion.<sup>35</sup>





The letters from Jack the Giant-Killer, by the way, were rather moral lectures, while the ball and pincushion were designed in two colours -- red and black -- so that pins might be stuck into the red for good deeds and into the black for naughty deeds. The contents of the book included rhymed instructions for games, a rhymed alphabet, and a selection of morals, proverbs, and fables.<sup>36</sup>

Other famous little books which carry the Newbery imprint are:

Tommy Trip's History of Beasts and Birds, a collection of verses and comments on various animals;<sup>37</sup> The Lilliputian Magazine, an interesting collection of jokes, riddles, games, fables, and stories;<sup>38</sup>

Mother Goose's Melody, a somewhat startling combination of nursery rhymes and Shakespearean lyrics;<sup>39</sup> and most outstanding of all, The History of Goody Two-Shoes, the story of a little girl with a penchant for instructing, who, from running about teaching the neighborhood children their letters, eventually gained such a reputation that she became mistress of a school when the position fell vacant. The crown of her career came when she married Sir Charles, a worthy gentleman of the district who was deeply appreciative of the lady's sterling qualities. This was the first novel for children,<sup>40</sup> a real success story interspersed with numerous improving observations and examples. Obviously didacticism was still flourishing, although it was a more pleasant sort of instruction. However, the spirit of fun which shone through Newbery's publications was soon to go down to defeat before a more serious and enthusiastic didacticism.





FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. Baugh, A.C., ed. A Literary History of England, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948, p. 303.
2. Ward, A.W., and Waller, A.R., ed. Cambridge History of English Literature, Cambridge: University Press, 1914, II, pp. 312-13, 314, 315.
3. Baugh, op. cit., p. 303.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Furnivall, F. J., ed. "Stans Puer ad Mensam," The Babees Book, . . . The Bokes of Nurture of Hugh Rhodes and John Russell, Wynkyn de Worde's Boke of Lerneynge . . ., E.E.T.S. No. 32, London: N. Trübner & Co., 1868, p. 29, ll. 36-42.
6. Furnivall, "The Babees Book," op. cit., p. 3, ll. 58-63
7. See Appendix, Section A, for "The Lytlylle Childrenes Lytil Boke."
8. Some of the early Latin texts are an exception, for there seems to be a desire to appeal to rough schoolboy humour in some of the Latin dialogues. (See Darton, F.J. Harvey, Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life, Cambridge: University Press, 1932, pp. 49-50.)
9. Furnivall, "The Lytlylle Childrenes Lytil Boke," op. cit., p. 22, ll. 101-02.
10. For amusement young people apparently turned to adult books -- romances, bestiaries, and fables -- for the authors of books of courtesy frequently warn readers against such literature. In the fourteenth century, the Knight of La Tour-Landry wrote:

And therfor this is a good ensaample to putte yonge children vnto the scole, and to make hem bokys of wisdom and of science, and bokes of vertu and profitable ensaamples, whereby they may see the sauement of the soule and of the body by the ensaamples of good leuinge of the holy faderes before us, and not forto studie in the bokis that speke of loue fables, and of other wordely vanitees. For it is beter and more noble thinge to here speke of good ensaamples, and of vertuous leuinge of seintes, whiche profitethe to oure sowles and body, thanne forto studie or to rede of fayned stories and fables, suche as may not cause encrese of science, and is inprofitable vnto the soule. (See Wright, Thomas, ed.,



The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry, Compiled for the Instruction of his Daughters, Revised edition, E.E.T.S., O.S., No. 33, London: Kegan Paul, 1906, p. 118)

In the sixteenth century, Hugh Rhodes indicated that the problem still existed. His advice to those who have the care of children is:

Take them often with you to heare Gods word preached, & then enquire of them what they heard, and vse them to reade in the Bible and other Godly Bokes, but especyally keepe them from reading of fayned fables, vayne fantasies, and wanton stories, and songs of loue, which bring much mischief to youth. (See Hugh Rhodes, The Boke of Nurture, or Schoole of good maners: For men, Servants, and children, Edition of 1577, which is included in Furnivall's work already cited, p. 64)

Roger Ascham, too, speaks against the old romances in The Scholemaster, published in 1570.

In our forefathers' time, when Papistry, as a standing pool, covered and overflowed all England, few books were read in our tongue, saving certain books of Chivalry, as they said, for pastime and pleasure, which, as some say, were made in monastries by idle monks or wanton canons: as one for example, Morte Arthure: the whole pleasure of which book standeth in two special points, in open manslaughter and bold bawdry. . . . Yet I know, when God's Bible was banished the Court, and Morte Arthure received into the Prince's chamber. What toys the daily reading of such a book may work in the will of a young gentleman or a young maid, that liveth wealthily and idly, wise men can judge and honest men do pity. (Quoted in Darton, op. cit., p. 45.)

11. Wright, op. cit., pp. xv-xvi.
12. Ibid., p. 3.
13. See Appendix, Section B, for example of illustrative story from The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry.
14. Cambridge History of English Literature, XI, p. 369.
15. Arbuthnot, May Hill, Children and Books, Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1947, p. 15.
16. See Appendix, Section C, for example from James Janeway's Token for Children.
17. Cambridge History of English Literature, XI, p. 369.
18. See Appendix, Section D, for example of Chear's poetry.



19. See Appendix, Section E, for examples of Bunyan's poems for children.
20. Muir, Percy, English Children's Books 1600 to 1900, London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1954, pp. 28-29.
21. See Appendix, Section F, for examples of Watts's poems for children.
22. Watts, Isaac, The Poetical Works of Isaac Watts and W. K. White, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1864, p. 316.
23. Ashton, John, Chap-Books of the Eighteenth Century, London: Chatto and Windus, 1882.
24. For specific passages referring to childhood reading of authors mentioned, see footnote 13, pp. 93-94
25. It is not absolutely clear whether in all examples cited the reference is to the chapbook edition. The economic status of Bunyan, and of the schoolboy Uncle Toby, would support such a conclusion in their case. Vera Brittain in In the Steps of John Bunyan (p. 66) identifies Bunyan's favorites as chapbooks. (It might be noted that she errs in including Bevis among the Seven Champions of Christendom, p. 67) Boswell's reference is unmistakably to chapbooks. That Steele's godson was reading chapbooks seems probable since the longer versions might be expected to present considerable difficulty to all but the most precocious eight-year-olds. With Coleridge it is difficult to be sure, but Wordsworth's description of his "slender abstract of the Arabian tales" as a "little yellow, canvas-covered book" would seem to fit a chapbook.
26. Meigs, Nesbitt, Eaton, Viguers, A Critical History of Children's Literature, New York: Macmillan Company, 1953, p. 61.
27. Hindley, Charles, The History of the Catnach Press, London: Charles Hindley, 1887.
28. Ashton, op. cit., p. 63.
29. There is some doubt as to whether the author of the Perrault fairy tales was the father, Charles, or his son Pierre, Perrault d'Armancour. Percy Muir sets forth the argument for the son's authorship in English Children's Books, pp. 45-49. Florence Barry states the case for the father's authorship in A Century of Children's Books, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1922, pp. 41-43.





30. What appears in the frontispiece is also subject to dispute. Muir in English Children's Books, p. 39, says there are three children. Compton Mackenzie, in a foreword to Norman Denny's translation of the Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault, identifies the figures as a man, a girl, and a little boy. (The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault, trans. Norman Denny, London: Bodley Head, 1950, p. 6.)
31. Muir, op. cit., p. 49.
32. Ibid., p. 40
33. The "Moralitez" supply support for the contention that Perrault intended his book to <sup>be</sup> read by adults, just as the stories themselves speak to a childish audience. The morals with which the author concludes each tale are occasionally addressed directly to the ladies, and frequently have more than a touch of the satirical about them.
34. Muir, op. cit., p. 67.
35. Arbuthnot, op. cit., p. 18.
36. Barry, op. cit., p. 61.
37. See Appendix, Section G, for excerpts from Tommy Trip's History of Beasts and Birds.
38. Barry, op. cit., pp. 61-65.
39. Adams, Bess Porter, About Books and Children, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1953, pp. 138-39.
40. Arbuthnot, op. cit., p. 18.





CHAPTER TWO

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

1780 - 1830



The most important writers for children in the strongly didactic period from 1780 to 1830 are Anna Laetitia Barbauld, John Aikin, Sara Trimmer, Thomas Day, Maria Edgeworth, and Mary Martha Sherwood. It is the work of these authors, along with that of Mary Wollstonecraft who is fairly representative of the host of lesser writers, which is now to be considered.

The first and most outstanding characteristic to strike the reader is the unanimous desire to teach and improve. Not only is this didactic purpose clearly revealed in the text of the books themselves, but it is frequently emphasized by being stated in the preface. A good example is Anna Laetitia Barbauld's Hymns in Prose for Children, published in 1781. It is a little volume of twelve hymns written in the style of the Psalms, with beautiful, cadenced phrases and simple, dignified diction. There can be no mistaking its religious didacticism, however, for throughout the hymns may be seen Mrs. Barbauld's desire to make the child aware of the beauties of nature and to relate that beauty to his conception of God. Here is the fourth hymn:

Come, and I will show you what is beautiful.  
It is a rose fully blown. See how she sits upon her  
mossy stem, like the queen of all the flowers! her  
leaves grow like fire: the air is filled with her  
sweet odour; she is the delight of every eye.

She is beautiful, but there is a fairer than  
she. He that made the rose is more beautiful than  
the rose; He is all lovely; He is the delight of  
every heart.

I will show you what is strong. The lion is  
strong; when he raiseth up himself from his lair,  
when he shaketh his mane, when the voice of his  
roaring is heard, the cattle of the field fly, and  
the wild beasts of the desert hide themselves, for  
he is very terrible.



The lion is strong, but He that made the lion is stronger than he: His anger is terrible; He could make us die in a moment, and no one could save us out of His hand.

. . . . .

The sun is glorious, but He that made the sun is more glorious than he. The eye beholdeth Him not, for His brightness is more dazzling than we could bear. He seeth in all dark places; by night as well as by day; and the light of His countenance is over all His works.

Who is this great Name, and what is He called, that my lips may praise Him?

This great Name is GOD. He made all things, but He is himself more excellent than all which He hath made: they are beautiful, but He is beauty; they are strong, but He is strength; they are perfect, but He is perfection.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Barbauld's purpose, implicit in the Hymns, is explicit in the preface, in which she states:

The peculiar design of this publication is to impress devotional feelings as early as possible on the infant mind; fully convinced, as the author is, that they cannot be impressed too soon, and that a child, to feel the full force of the idea of God, ought never to remember the time when he had no such idea.<sup>2</sup>

Her other most important work is one for which she shares credit with her brother, John Aikin -- who, in fact, is responsible for most of the actual writing.<sup>3</sup> It is a six-volume work entitled Evenings at Home; or, The Juvenile Budget Opened. Consisting of a Variety of Miscellaneous Pieces for the Instruction and Amusement of Young Persons (1782-86). It is a miscellany of plays, stories, poems, and lessons, intended, according to the introduction, "for promoting the instruction and entertainment of the younger part of the household."<sup>4</sup> That instruction is given first consider-





ation is indicated by the selections which comprise the "instruction and entertainment" for the first evening. They include: a dialogue between two boys and their tutor on the subject of the oak tree; two fables, one about a young mouse and a trap, the other about a bee and a wasp; and "Travellers' Wonders", an account by Captain Compass of the strange life of a strange people who turn out to be Englishmen, the story being intended to show that,

a foreigner might easily represent everything as equally strange and wonderful among us, as we could do with respect to his country; and also to make you sensible that we daily call a great many things by their names, without ever inquiring into their nature and properties; so that, in reality, it is only the names, and not the things themselves, with which we are acquainted.<sup>5</sup>

The didactic note is equally unmistakable in Sara Trimmer's Fabulous Histories (1786) or, as it was later to be called, The History of the Robins.<sup>6</sup> Once again the purpose is made abundantly clear in the preface which states that the "little Book . . . was written with the benevolent design of teaching the young to be tender-hearted and compassionate, not only to the feathered race, but to all the animal creation."<sup>7</sup> The author's instruction, however, does not stop with the proper treatment of animals. Instead she treats a diversity of subjects -- proper manners, obedience to parents, charity, courage, responsibility, and religion -- and frequently emphasizes individual lessons by illustrating them both in the life of the Benson family and in the upbringing of the four young robins by their exemplary parents.

Mary Wollstonecraft is another stern purveyor of improving





precepts. Her book entitled Original Stories from Real Life; with Conversations, calculated to Regulate the Affections, and Form the Mind to Truth and Goodness (1788) reveals her proneness to preach in the preface, in which she deploras "the present state of society; which obliges the author to attempt to cure those faults by reason, which ought never to have taken root in the infant mind."<sup>8</sup> To achieve this end, the author introduces the main character, Mrs. Mason, as "a woman of tenderness and discernment"<sup>9</sup> who undertakes the care and tuition of two young girls, Mary and Caroline, in order to eradicate those prejudices which have resulted from their upbringing by servants, and to substitute good habits. To this end she lectures them about the kind treatment of animals; warns them against the vices of anger, lying, immoderate indulgence, idleness, and false pride; and recommends the virtues of true dignity, honour, employment, prayer, devotion, and charity. In spite of Mary Wollstonecraft's description of Mrs. Mason as the possessor of tenderness and discernment, there is no attempt whatever to disguise the sternly didactic tone of the book. For example, when Mary and Caroline get into a heated argument as to who shall feed a young bird, and in the ensuing struggle inadvertently kill it, Mrs. Mason calmly addresses them:

I perceive that you are ashamed of your behaviour, and sorry for the consequence; I will not therefore severely reprove you, nor add bitterness to the self-reproach you must both feel, -- because I pity you. You are now inferiour to the animals that graze on the common; reason only serves to render your folly more conspicuous and inexcusable. Anger, is a little despicable vice; its selfish emotions banish compassion, and undermine every virtue. It is easy to conquer another; but noble



to subdue oneself. Had you, Mary, given way to your sister's humour, you would have proved that you were not only older, but wiser than her. And you, Caroline, would have saved your charge, if you had, for the time, waved (sic) your right<sup>10</sup>

This is only the beginning, for the lecture proper continues at some length, and then is emphasized by the life story of one, Jane Fretful, who comes to a most unhappy end through giving way to anger.

Thomas Day, the author of The History of Sandford and Merton (1783-89), eschews the type of lecture which appears in Original Stories or in The History of the Robins but he makes no attempt to disguise the book's didacticism. The History of Sandford and Merton (1783-89) is sometimes referred to as the English Emile influenced as it was by Rousseau's Emile.<sup>11</sup> Briefly, the book tells the story of two young boys -- Harry, the fine upstanding son of an English farmer, and Tommy, the spoiled and delicate offspring of the wealthy landowning Mr. Merton. Mr. Merton, dissatisfied with his own son and impressed with the admirable qualities of young Harry, turns Tommy over to the clergyman who has been tutoring Harry. From this point Tommy begins to learn the hard way the lessons which the author felt were so important to children, lessons in factual knowledge and lessons in character-building. The morning after Tommy's arrival he is invited to join Harry and Mr. Barlow in digging in the garden. Tommy, who feels such an occupation is unsuitable to a gentleman, is allowed to decline, but later is refused a share of the cherries with which the others refresh themselves. When he still fails to see the light, he is





refused supper, for as Mr. Barlow explains, "' as you are too much of a gentleman to work, we, who are not so, do not choose to work for the idle.'"12 Harry, who is a sympathetic soul, gives his supper to his friend, but Tommy has learned his lesson, and next morning requests a hoe and sets to work along with the other two. His reward is most satisfactory, for,

in a short time, he became very expert, and worked with the greatest pleasure. When their work was over, they retired all three to the summer-house; and Tommy felt the greatest joy imaginable when the fruit was produced, and he was invited to take his share, which seemed to him the most delicious he had ever tasted, because working in the air had given him an appetite.<sup>13</sup>

From the foregoing example, one can see the working out of Day's intention expressed in the preface to the first volume -- "to form and interest the minds of children."<sup>14</sup>

One of the best of the didactic writers is Maria Edgeworth. She is no less concerned with improving small readers than are the authors already mentioned, but this concern is not so obvious. Her stories carry themselves along through the interest of their plots and their characters. However, although her purpose may not always display itself ostentatiously in the actual stories, it is made quite clear in what she has to say about them. Such is the case with The Parent's Assistant (1796) whose entertaining stories she prefaces with the statement:

It has been attempted, in these stories, to provide antidotes against ill-humour, the epidemic rage for dissipation, and the fatal propensity to admire and imitate whatever the fashion of the moment may distinguish.<sup>15</sup>



A little further on, she adds, almost apologetically:

To prevent the precepts of morality from tiring the ear and the mind, it was necessary to make the stories in which they are introduced in some measure dramatic; to keep alive hope and fear and curiosity, by some degree of intricacy.<sup>16</sup>

As her preface suggests, her stories are centered around certain moral qualities. In the story of "Lazy Lawrence" her object is "to excite a spirit of industry",<sup>17</sup> both by contrasting Lawrence with the industrious and admirable Jem, and by showing the eventual fate of the former. Lawrence's idle way of life leads him to evil companions who in turn encourage him to steal. He is caught and sent to gaol where, fortunately, he realizes his folly and upon his release becomes remarkable for his industry. In "The Orphans" Miss Edgeworth shows that honesty is indeed the best policy by rewarding the orphans with a newly built slated house "rent-free, . . . as long as Mary or her sisters should carry on in it any useful business."<sup>18</sup> In "Waste Not, Want Not," Miss Edgeworth tells the story of two young boys, Ben and Hal. Ben, who is of a thrifty turn of mind, saves the cord from a parcel given him by his uncle, but Hall who lacks both thrift and patience cuts the cord on his parcel so that it is quite useless. From this point on, the pieces of whipcord continually figure in the tale, Ben finding numerous uses for his whole one, Hal finding himself as often at a loss for want of his. Finally Ben succeeds in winning an important archery contest through having his piece of cord to substitute for his bowstring which breaks at the crucial moment. Obviously the moral constitutes the whole foundation of the story,





but for the reader the story is the thing that matters, and what he learns in a moral sense is the result of observing cause and effect in action, not of being told directly what he should or should not do. The interest of the plots doubtless owes much to the fact that all Maria's stories were tried out first on other members of the family, and since she was the second eldest of twenty-two children, she had a not inconsequential audience. Their criticism was encouraged, and if they objected to any particular passage, Maria usually changed it or removed it.<sup>19</sup> She recognized the importance of pleasing her public.

Mrs. Sherwood presents a sharp contrast to Maria Edgeworth in her approach to instruction, preferring to drive home each lesson directly and repeatedly instead of leaving the reader to absorb it from the example presented by the characters. Her concern, which is usually quite clearly stated at the beginning of each story, is invariably with the spiritual welfare of her readers, although she manages to relate most of the usual instruction in obedience, good manners, charity, and so on, to the main topic. One of the best and most famous examples of her art is The History of the Fairchild Family. (1818-1847). No sooner has she introduced the members of the family, than she launches into what is nearest and dearest to her heart.

Mr. and Mrs. Fairchild had been brought to the knowledge of God in the early part of their lives.

It is the greatest blessing which we can possibly receive, to be made to know our God, and to be made acquainted with all that He has done for our salvation. It is the work of the Spirit to bring us to this knowledge; and they who are thus enlightened have new hearts given them, and are entirely changed -- insomuch that they may be called new creatures; and the way by which we may



know those whose hearts are changed, through the power of the Spirit, is, that they love God above all things, and seek the everlasting good of their friends on earth with a degree of earnestness which makes them despise all other things in the comparison.

So it was with Mr. and Mrs. Fairchild. They did not wish their dear little children to be handsome, or rich, or powerful in the world: all that they desired for them was, the blessing of God; without which, all that this world can give is nothing worth.<sup>20</sup>

The book continues in much the same vein -- the vehicle of religious preaching sometimes being Mr. Fairchild, sometimes Mrs. Fairchild, sometimes Mrs. Sherwood herself. Even the chapter headings indicate Mrs. Sherwood's preoccupation with religion: "Man before the Fall," "General Depravity of Mankind in all Countries after the Fall," "Story of the Commandments," "Story on the Sixth Commandment," "On the Formation of Sin in the Heart," and so on.<sup>21</sup>

From even such a brief review as the foregoing it appears that the major writers for children during the period from 1780 to 1830 were predominantly concerned with teaching and improving the younger generation. The scope of their instruction was broad, including as it did social behaviour, moral qualities, religious knowledge, and factual information; but they recognized the need for such instruction and would not shirk their duty. They were indeed sincerely interested in the welfare of children.

Although the salient feature of the juvenile literature during this half century is its didacticism, there are several other features, to some extent related to it, which attract the attention of the reader. One of these is the general attitude





toward children and childhood. There seems to be a definite consciousness of the inferiority of children as human beings. This feeling manifests itself in various ways and in varying intensity, but is there nevertheless. Mrs. Barbauld, for example, in the preface to her Hymns in Prose commends Dr. Watts<sup>22</sup> on his Hymns for Children, pointing out that he is "deservedly honoured for the condescension of his Muse, which was very able to take a loftier flight."<sup>23</sup>

Mrs. Trimmer's feeling with regard to children's inferiority appears less subtly and more frequently in her writing. In The Robins, when Mrs. Benson is lecturing young Frederick for his failure to pay his respects to her upon his first appearance in the morning, she points out,

".. .remember that you depend as much upon your father and me for everything you want, as these little birds do on you; nay, more so, for they could find food in other places, but children can do nothing towards their own support, and should therefore be dutiful and respectful to those whose tenderness and care they constantly experience."<sup>24</sup>

The parent robins, too, sing the same theme to their offspring, the mother robin reproving her young son for being unwilling to accept his father's help in learning to fly. "'You may depend on it, Robin,' she said, 'that he is in every respect wiser than you.'"<sup>25</sup>

In Original Stories, Mary Wollstonecraft is equally outspoken in her disparagement of children as compared with adults. In recommending to her charges the kind treatment of animals, Mrs. Mason says, "It is only to animals that children can do good, men are their superiors."<sup>26</sup> Later, when pointing out the advantage



of self-control as compared with immoderate indulgence, she informs the erring Caroline that, "Coming home I called [Mary] my friend, and she deserved the name, for she was no longer a child; . . . she had practised a virtue."<sup>27</sup> Apparently in Mrs. Mason's opinion, children are not worthy to be the friends of adults; nor is virtue a childish quality.

Thomas Day, the author of Sandford and Merton, is far less likely to tell his young readers directly that they are inferior beings in society. He contents himself with depicting Mr. Barlow as the icily perfect tutor who is always right, and showing young Tommy, the spoiled scion of the Merton family, as foolish and headstrong -- and almost always wrong. Harry, who is the example of all Tommy should be, naturally is painted in glowing colours, but he continually gives credit for his virtue and his knowledge to the indefatigable efforts of his tutor.<sup>28</sup>

Maria Edgeworth is probably the least offender as far as talking down to children is concerned. Although she was a staunch believer in many of the theories so dear to Thomas Day,<sup>29</sup> she had more of the human touch -- she knew children intimately and loved them for what they were.<sup>30</sup> Although the Edgeworth home nearly always contained a fair number of normal, happy children, Maria apparently did not feel it necessary to maintain an unbending and conscious authority, for her father claimed that "he did not think one tear per month was shed in his house nor the voice of reproof heard nor the hand of restraint felt."<sup>31</sup>





Writing from such a family background, it is not surprising that Maria usually recognizes the importance of children and avoids talking down to them. However, there are a number of her stories in which she shows unmistakably her kinship with the other didactic writers. Among them are the "Rosamond" tales which boast peerless parents and a very human, but erring, youngster -- Rosamond. In one of these stories, "A Day of Misfortunes," Rosamond starts off the day by dawdling in bed -- and from that point everything goes wrong. After three bouts of weeping, Rosamond finally talks her problem out with her mother. At first she blames her crying on the cold room in which she has had to dress. Then she excuses herself on the basis of the short strings on her cap which became knotted. Finally she admits that really there was another reason which she is afraid to tell her mother for fear the latter will think it more foolish than her other reasons. At this point, her mother says,

"But tell it to me, notwithstanding," . . . "because the way to prevent yourself from being foolish again is to find out what made you so just now. If you tell me what you think and what you feel, perhaps I may help you to manage yourself so as to make you wise, and good, and happy; but unless I know what passes in your little mind, I shall not be able to help you."<sup>32</sup>

Here the superior tone makes itself heard quite clearly.

Where Maria Edgeworth only occasionally brings into her writing the inferior status of children Mrs. Sherwood invariably emphasizes it. Her strongly religious bias makes her sharply aware of their vulnerability to temptation, the result of a lack of knowledge and experience which is the concomitant of youth. Since they



are only beginning to know their sinful natures, and since they are unable to judge right and wrong behaviour, they can easily fall into habits of sin and wickedness. Therefore it is important that they be brought to an awareness of their limitations, and that they accept unquestioningly the guidance of their parents, who have learned to control their own "vile natures" to a large extent, and have the necessary knowledge and experience to know what is good for their offspring. In The History of the Fairchild Family, the relationship of adult to child is made uncompromisingly clear as Mr. Fairchild points out sternly to his disobedient son, "'I stand in the place of God to you, whilst you are a child; and as long as I do not ask you to do anything wrong, you must obey me'".<sup>33</sup> In her efforts to keep young people from the sin of self-importance and to teach them humility, Mrs. Sherwood never flags. On one occasion, when Lucy says to her mother, "'Mamma, I think that Emily and Henry and I are much better children than we used to be; we have not been punished for a very long time,'" Mrs. Fairchild replies, "'My dear, . . . do not boast or think well of yourself: . . . If you have not done any very naughty thing lately, it is not because there is any goodness or wisdom in you, but because your papa and I have been always with you, carefully watching and guiding you from morning till night.'"<sup>34</sup> The whole tone of The Fairchild Family gives the reader a feeling that the author is talking down to him, that she never forgets that the child is a lesser being in every way.

Not only are children relegated to an inferior position in





society by the didactic writers, but childhood itself has no importance except as a preparatory period for adulthood. Because of the prestige accorded to the mature man or woman, the only activities approved for childhood are those which will help to develop an adult of wide education, pleasing manners, proper attitudes, and good character. (Day and Edgeworth would probably add to these a good physique.) Thus, free and unsupervised play, unless it has an obvious educational value, is carefully limited. Instead, industry is encouraged as a means of building character.

In the introduction to Original Stories, Mary Wollstonecraft states that, in order to undo the harm that had already been done to the characters of Caroline and Mary, Mrs. Mason never permitted the girls to be out of her sight.<sup>35</sup> Their recreation is not only supervised, but directed by their governess whose idea of amusement is a nice, instructive walk together. Mary Wollstonecraft expresses the opinion that unless children are doing something useful they are unhappy, and adds that idleness leads them to do foolish things and may even lead to their committing a sin. Such is the case when, for once, Mary and Caroline are allowed to amuse themselves as they wish. Their sin, according to Mrs. Mason, is in devouring cakes "without feeling hunger, merely to kill time, whilst many poor people have not the means of satisfying their natural wants."<sup>36</sup>

Mrs. Benson, the mother in Mrs. Trimmer's History of the Robins, is not quite so strict in her supervision, perhaps because there is no need to be. She leaves her two children alone with





their two visitors "that they might indulge themselves in innocent amusements without restraint,"<sup>37</sup> but their amusements consist of chatting and looking at books. Such moments of relaxation must be earned by lessons well done,<sup>38</sup> however. As Mrs. Benson points out to the youngsters when they are viewing a beehive, "'If such little insects as these perform their daily tasks with so much alacrity, surely it must be a shame for children to be idle, and to fret because they are put to learn things which will be of the utmost consequence to them in the end.'"<sup>39</sup>

Day, in his Sandford and Merton, at first glance would seem to have a more modern attitude. He approves of "playing about, and jumping, and running"<sup>40</sup> and seems quite happy that Tommy and Harry should spend their time in such pursuits as building a brushwood hut, or rolling a great snowball. However, no matter what activity they undertake there is a practical lesson to be learned -- whether it be how to construct a rainproof roof, or the principle of the lever. There is no foolishness in this sort of play.

Maria Edgeworth has no quarrel with free play, but she frequently points out the advantage of industry. She had the doctrine of USE well drilled into her thinking by her father. To be of use was one of the main criteria of success with the Edgeworths.<sup>41</sup> Thus, in "Lazy Lawrence" when young Jem finishes his gardening for the day, he rushes off to play cricket with the village boys, "the merriest and the most active amongst them,"<sup>42</sup> but the reader is obviously expected to realize how much better it is when Jem uses his play time



to construct a mat of heath to please his mistress -- and Miss Edgeworth sees that he is duly rewarded for his labors.

Mrs. Sherwood also gives a place to play in the child's world, but the following account of a typical day in the life of the Fairchild children shows its role is a minor one.

As soon as the children got up, they used to go into their papa and mamma's room to prayers; after which Henry went with his papa into the garden, whilst Lucy and Emily made their beds and rubbed the furniture; afterwards they all met at breakfast, dressed neatly but very plain. At breakfast the children ate what their mamma gave them, and seldom spoke till they were spoken to. After breakfast Betty and John were called in and all went to prayers. Then Henry went into his papa's study, to his lessons; and Lucy and Emily stayed with their mamma, working and reading till twelve o'clock, when they used to go out to take a walk all together; sometimes they went to the schools, and sometimes they went to see a poor person. When they came in, dinner was ready. After dinner, the little girls and their mamma worked, whilst Henry read to them, till tea time; and after tea Lucy and Emily played with their doll and worked for it; and Henry busied himself in making some little things of wood, which his papa showed him how to do; and so they spent their time, till Betty and John came in to evening prayers: then the children had each of them a baked apple, and went to bed.<sup>43</sup>

What little play is here is clearly well supervised. On the few occasions when Mr. and Mrs. Fairchild do leave the children on their own for the day without stating specifically what they are to do, their idleness leads them into trouble.<sup>44</sup>

The foregoing picture of the Fairchild children's day also suggests another characteristic attitude of the didactic writers



toward children; that is, their strictness. The standard of behaviour as it appears in the books under discussion is generally high, and is maintained firmly. Parents or tutors put their duty before affection to their charges, and mete out discipline, or watch nemesis descend upon the erring ones, with a calm impersonality which is frightening in itself.

There are any number of examples of this attitude. In Mrs. Trimmer's History of the Robins, the young birds are firmly disciplined by their excellent parents. When Robin quarrels with his brother and sisters in defiance of his mother's express command, he is excluded from his usual place under her wings, deprived of his food, and given a lecture by his father, all of which work the necessary reformation in young Robin, at least for the moment.<sup>45</sup> Later, his disobedience causes him to take a nasty fall when he is learning to fly. Mrs. Trimmer is quite willing that his injury should hamper him all his life to prove her point, although Robin's penitence is surely as abject as one could ask. He casts himself at his parent's feet saying, "permit me to make my grateful acknowledgements for your kindness, and to assure you of my future obedience."<sup>46</sup>

Mary Wollstonecraft's Mrs. Mason also has a devotion to duty which prompts her to speak to her young charges in the coldest of tones. In the episode of the dead bird mentioned previously<sup>47</sup> Mary and Caroline were guilty not only of causing the bird's death, but of blaming one another for the deed. Mrs. Mason lectures them:





Yesterday, said she to them, I only mentioned to you one fault, though I observed two. You very readily guess I mean the lie that you both told. Nay, look up, for I wish to see you blush; and the confusion which I perceive in your faces gives me pleasure; because it convinces me that it is not a confirmed habit: and, indeed, my children, I should be sorry that such a mean one had taken deep root in your infant minds.<sup>48</sup>

The very control with which the governess speaks accentuates the seriousness of her rebuke. Although her methods of discipline may not include corporal punishment, they are nevertheless extremely effective, a fact attested by the conversation between the two girls one night in bed. They are aware that Mrs. Mason is displeased with them, but do not know why.

I declare I cannot go to sleep, said Mary, I am afraid of Mrs. Mason's eyes -- would you think, Caroline, that she who looks so very good-natured sometimes, could frighten one so? . . . My heart is in my mouth, indeed, replied Caroline, when I think of to-morrow morning.<sup>49</sup>

The behaviour which has brought down upon their heads the disapproval of their governess, while anything but praiseworthy, would not seem to be too serious. Caroline has allowed her head to be turned by the foolish flattery of visitors, while Mary has displayed a certain amount of amusement over a toothless old lady. Such behaviour, however, falls far short of the desired standard, and Mrs. Mason is prepared to remedy it.

Mr. Barlow, in Day's Sandford and Merton, can be just as exacting and just as strict. One day Tommy, having knocked his ball into an adjoining field, demands that a ragged little boy throw it back to him. The boy, resenting Tommy's peremptory tone, refuses,





whereupon Tommy proposes to thrash him. Unfortunately for Tommy, in his haste he falls into a muddy ditch, from which he extricates himself only with the help of his intended victim. Without even a "thank you" Tommy runs home. Mr. Barlow, upon hearing of the episode, shows his pupil the error of his ways; and Tommy determines to rectify matters. He happens to meet the boy again, and learns that he and his seven brothers and sisters are in dire straits, his father being ill and unable to work. Tommy, who is basically kindhearted, runs home for a suit of his clothes and a loaf of bread for the boy. Full of a sense of well-being as a result of his philanthropy, Tommy tells Mr. Barlow what he has done.

Mr. Barlow coolly answered, "You have done very well in giving the little boy clothes, because they are your own: but what right have you to give away my loaf of bread without asking my consent?" --Tommy. Why, sir, I did it because the little boy said he was very hungry, and had seven brothers and sisters, and that his father was ill, and could not work. --Mr. B. This is a very good reason why you should give them what belongs to yourself; but not why you should give away what is another's. What would you say, if Harry were to give away all your clothes, without asking your leave? --T. I should not like it at all; and I will not give away your things any more without asking your leave. --"You will do well," said Mr. Barlow.<sup>50</sup>

From the point of view of discipline, Day avoids downright commands to do or not to do. He prefers that children should decide for themselves the right course of action. To achieve this end in his book, he has Mr. Barlow provide an explanation or an argument to support any behaviour which he deems desirable, or better still



has him lead the boys to the right conclusion through a series of questions. For example, with regard to Tommy's behaviour to the poor boy who helped him out of the ditch, Mr. Barlow uses the question method.

"Sir," answered Tommy, a little confused, " I should not have attempted to beat him, only he would not bring me my ball." --Mr.B. And what right had you to oblige him to bring your ball? --T. Sir, he was a little ragged boy, and I am a gentleman. --Mr.B. So then, every gentleman has a right to command little ragged boys? --T. To be sure, sir. --Mr.B. Then if your clothes should wear out and become ragged, every gentleman will have a right to command you?

Tommy looked a little foolish.<sup>51</sup>

Apparently Tommy gets the point and will behave differently should a similar situation arise. The requirements of discipline have been satisfied.

Maria Edgeworth follows Day in avoiding specific injunctions to the children in her stories. Indeed, there is less of the martinet about her than about most of the didactic writers. Many of the children are so idealized that there is no need for correction of any sort. However, some of her stories which deal with ordinary, middle-class children show the iron in her soul. Again the "Rosamond" stories are the chief examples. In "The Birthday Present" Rosamond has been pointing out the wonders of the birthday of one of her acquaintances, Bell. Bell is given a big dinner, she receives a great many presents, and everybody drinks her health. This state of affairs seems highly desirable to Rosamond; so she broaches the matter to her mother.

". . . mother . . . will you -- not now, but when you've time -- will you tell me why you never keep





my birthday -- why you never make any difference between that day and any other day?" "And will you, Rosamond -- not now, but when you have time to think about it -- tell me why I should make any difference between your birthday and any other day?"<sup>52</sup>

Such a mother would seem worthy of being classed with Trimmer's Mrs. Benson, or even Wollstonecraft's Mrs. Mason. Nor is she any different in another famous Rosamond story, "The Purple Jar," in which Rosamond chooses to have a beautiful purple jar instead of new shoes. Since she has made her decision, Rosamond is required to abide by it, even after she discovers upon emptying the jar that the lovely colour belongs to the liquid, not the glass. For a month she makes the best of her worn-out shoes, and as a crowning punishment, she is prevented by their state of disrepair from going to the circus. Rosamond's lesson is indeed a hard one.<sup>53</sup>

With Maria Edgeworth, parents as strict as Rosamond's mother are the exception; with Mrs. Sherwood, they are the rule. She believes that,

All children are by nature evil, and while they have none but the natural evil principle to guide them, pious and prudent parents must check their naughty passions in any way that they have in their power, and force them into decent and proper behaviour and into what are called good habits.<sup>54</sup>

The Fairchild children are, therefore, watched continually and with vigilance for the least misdemeanour, for in even the smallest faults their parents see the beginning of heinous sins. The high standard of behaviour upon which Mrs. Sherwood insists can be gathered from Lucy's daily journal of secret sins which her mother





has suggested she keep.

"When I woke this morning, mamma called me to make my bed; and I felt cross, and wished I was like Miss Augusta Noble, and had servants to wait upon me; and that Lady Noble was my mamma, and not my own dear mamma.

"Mamma gave Emily a bit of muslin and some pink ribbon, and I was envious, and hated Emily a little while, though I knew it was wicked.

"When papa gave Henry the strawberry I was angry again; and then I thought of Mrs. Giles, who loves one of her little girls and hates the other. I thought that my papa and mamma were like Mrs. Giles, and that they loved Henry and Emily more than me.

"When papa was reading and praying I wanted to be at play, and was tired of the Bible, and did not wish to hear it.

"And then I thought a very bad thought, indeed! When Mrs. Barker came, I despised her for not being pretty, though I knew that God had made her such as she is, and that He could make me like her in one moment."

As soon as Lucy had finished writing these last words she heard her mamma come upstairs and go into her room: she immediately ran to her, and showing her the book, "Oh, mamma, mamma!" she said, "you cannot think what a wicked heart I have got! Here is my journal; I am ashamed to show it to you: pray do not hate me for what is written in that book."<sup>55</sup>

Usually it is sufficient for Mr. and Mrs. Fairchild to point out to their children the error of their ways, but occasionally more spartan treatment is necessary. In such cases, neither parent hesitates to use corporal punishment, or even more extreme measures. For example, when little Henry persistently refuses to learn his Latin lesson, his father is the sternest of parents.

Mr. Fairchild finished his letter, and looking at his watch, "It is now walking time, Henry," he said, "I shall go out, and leave you here.



If I find that you can say your lesson before I return, you shall have your dinner, if not, you shall have only bread and water." So saying, Mr. Fairchild took his hat and stick, and, going out of the study, locked Henry in.

When Mr. Fairchild came in, he called Henry to say his lesson, but Henry could not repeat half a line of it; and Mr. Fairchild thought that he looked as if he were determined not to learn it. However, to try him, he bade John give him some bread and water, and sent him back to the study till tea-time. At tea-time he called him again, but he could not repeat one word more than he had before. Mr. Fairchild then took a small horsewhip, and making John hold him he flogged him well and sent him to bed, telling him he must say the lesson before breakfast. Accordingly, before breakfast, he called him again, but not one word more than the half line would Henry say.<sup>56</sup>

Mr. Fairchild finally gives orders to his household that no one is to speak to Henry or have anything whatsoever to do with him, with the exception of the maid who may give him bread and water. Two or three days of this treatment have the desired effect -- understandably. Mrs. Sherwood, in common with her fellow writers, held strong convictions on the subject of obedience. For children to rebel against the authority of a parent was to challenge the whole idea of their subordinate position -- which in turn implied a questioning of the superiority of the parent.

This superiority of the adult is another idea which is characteristic of the didactic writers in general during the period under discussion. Of course, there are various adults appearing in all the books who are wicked or foolish, but the deplorable characteristics of these are always more than balanced by the rectitude of the perfect parents or tutor.



The superiority of the adult has already been illustrated to some extent in the excerpts concerned with the inferior status of children. However, there are two other examples which help to indicate the adult's consciousness of his position. One of these appears in the material intended for the eighth evening in Evenings at Home by Aikin and Barbauld. The tutor and his young pupil are about to have a cup of tea. This fact leads to a long discourse on various aspects of chemistry -- infusion, decoction, maceration, solution, saturation, distillation, and so on. When the lecture finally draws to a conclusion, the pupil exclaims, "Why, I understand it all without any difficulty," to which the tutor replies with almost smug superiority, "I intended you should."<sup>57</sup> The second illustration comes from Mary Wollstonecraft's Original Stories. Mrs. Mason has taken Mary and Caroline to task for their failure to adhere strictly to the truth. To drive home her point, she concludes with an almost pharisaical complacency, "I govern my servants, and you, by attending strictly to truth, and this observance keeping my head clear and my heart pure, I am ever ready to pray to the Author of good, the Fountain of truth."<sup>58</sup>

The desire of the didactic writers to place the adult on a pedestal has a second result. It leads them to eschew the humorous in their treatment of all perfect adults. Even those who are foolish are presented as objects of pity and regret, or at most, of disapprobation. Such is the case with Mrs. Sherwood's portrait of the elder Miss Crosbie who comes with her brother and his wife





to visit the Fairchild family.

Miss Crosbie was as old as her brother, but she did not look so, for her face was painted red and white; and she and Miss Betty had sky-blue hats and tippets with white feathers... .  
"Have you any company, Mrs. Fairchild?" said Miss Crosbie, as Mrs. Fairchild was leading them into the parlour. "Only one gentleman, Mr. Somers, our rector," said Mrs. Fairchild. "Oh! then I must not appear in this gown! and my hair, too, is all rough," said Miss Crosbie; "I must put on another gown; I am quite frightful to look at!"<sup>59</sup>

Through twentieth-century eyes, Miss Crosbie might almost appear as a comic figure, but comedy was far from Mrs. Sherwood's intention. Miss Crosbie's vanity and love of finery are not displayed by the author to amuse but to emphasize a lesson on "besetting sins." Mrs. Fairchild explains:

"I told you that, without the help of the Holy Spirit of God, very few people know what their own besetting sins are. You had an opportunity to-day of observing this: every individual of our friend Mr. Crosbie's family has a very strong besetting sin; Mr. Crosbie loves eating; Mrs. Crosbie is ill-tempered; Miss Crosbie is vain, and fond of finery; and Miss Betsy is very pert and forward. We can see these faults in them, and they can see them in each other; but it is plain they do not see them in themselves. Mr. Crosbie said several times that he was not particular about what he ate or drank; Mrs. Crosbie said that there was not a person in the world who thought her ill-tempered but her husband; Miss Crosbie said that nobody in the world cared less for finery than she did; and Miss Betsey was quite offended when she was told she was not respectful in her manners to her elders." . . . . .  
"I do not speak of our poor friends' faults out of malice, or for the sake of making a mockery of them; but to show you how people



may live in the constant practice of one particular sin without being at all conscious of it, and perhaps thinking themselves very good all the time."<sup>60</sup>

The final proof that Miss Crosbie is not a figure of fun comes when Emily and Lucy indulge themselves in saying unkind things about her only to find that she has brought them some lovely gifts. Lucy tries to thank her:

She stood one moment, and then, throwing her arms round her neck and pressing her face against her shoulder, she sobbed deeply.

Miss Crosbie was certainly surprised; she did not expect that her present could have made the little girl feel so much. She spoke very kindly to her, put her arms around her, kissed her several times, and said: "But, my dear, a bonnet and a tippet are not worthy of such deep gratitude; you make me ashamed that I have done so little for you."<sup>61</sup>

Certainly there is no comic relief intended here.

Again, the main exception to the rule is Maria Edgeworth. From time to time into her stories slips a character who is frankly amusing, even comical. Such a one is the housekeeper, Pomfret, who appears in "The False Key." She belongs to a line of justly famous characters who contrive to commit mayhem on the Queen's English -- Mistress Quickly, Mrs. Slipslop, and Mrs. Malaprop. In discussing with her mistress a young lad who is to be taken into service she says:

"Ma'am, is not this the boy Mr. Spencer was talking of one day -- that has been brought up by the Villaintropic Society, I think they call it?" -- "Philanthropic Society; yes" said her mistress; "and my brother gives him a high character: I hope he will do very well!" "I'm



sure I hope so too," observed Mrs. Pomfret; "but I can't say; for my part, I've no great notion of those low people. They say all those children are taken from the very lowest drugs and refuges of the town, and surely they are like enough, ma'am, to take after their own fathers and mothers."<sup>62</sup>

However, even when Miss Edgeworth's sense of humour does betray her into some such facetious characterization, she is careful that the final impression left in the minds of the readers is the correct one. Thus, in "The White Pigeon" she introduces Mr. Cox, "an ale-housekeeper, who did not bear a very good character," through the following dialogue:

"Please your honour, sir," said he to Mr. Somerville, "I expected, since I bid as fair and fairer for it than any other, that you would have let me the house next the apothecary's. Was not it fifteen guineas I mentioned in my proposal? and did not your honour give it against me for thirteen?" "My honour did just so," replied Mr. Somerville calmly. "And please your honour, but I don't know what it is I or mine have done to offend you. I'm sure there is not a gentleman in all Ireland I'd go further to sarve. Would not I go to Cork to-morrow for the least word from your honour?" "I am much obliged to you, Mr. Cox, but I have no business at Cork at present," answered Mr. Somerville drily. "It is all I wish," exclaimed Mr. Cox, "that I could find out and light upon the man that has belied me to your honour." "No man has belied you, Mr. Cox, but your nose belies you much, if you do not love drinking a little, and your black eye and cut chin belie you much if you do not love quarrelling a little." "Quarrel! I quarrel, please your honour! I defy any man or set of men, ten mile round, to prove such a thing, and I am ready to fight him that dares to say the like of me. I'd fight him here in your honour's presence, if he'd only come out this minute and meet me like a man."<sup>63</sup>





After Mr. Cox has defended himself against the charge of drinking with much the same ineptness, he is turned down flatly by Mr. Somerville. "'Well, God bless your honour; I've no more to say, but God bless your honour,'" said Mr. Cox; and he walked away, muttering to himself, as he slouched his hat over his face, 'I hope I'll live to be revenged on him!'"<sup>64</sup> Later his bad character is responsible for getting Cox mixed up with some thieves who intend to rob Mr. Somerville's house; and his son, who is one of the gang, is captured along with the others when their plans fall through. Obviously quarrelling and drinking are not to be taken lightly, not considered as laughing matters.

The general lack of humour stands out particularly clearly in the relationship between parents and children. There seems to be no joking between the junior and senior members of a family, no light-hearted teasing. Perhaps parents fear that if they indulge in joking on occasion, their children may be uncertain when to accept what is said at face value, when to take it as being only in fun. Perhaps it is merely a feeling that jesting with their children is beneath their dignity. And as for the children -- to joke with a serious parent might easily be considered presumptuous. Whatever the reasons, however, there can be no denying that in the didactic works of the period, life is real and life is earnest.

Another noteworthy trait of this literature, one which has been evident in a number of the passages quoted, is its pervasive



religious note. Scarcely a book appeared which failed to make clear the fact that the author was a staunch supporter of Christianity, and most of the didactic works include the inculcation of religious ideas and attitudes among their educational aims. Mrs. Barbauld's Hymns in Prose is, of course, exclusively religious in content. Evenings at Home, for which she and her brother Dr. Aikin collaborated, while not primarily intended to present religious instruction, nevertheless does not neglect the subject. For example, both King Alfred -- in the famous story of the cakes, and King Canute -- in the equally famous account of the tide, express suitably Christian sentiments.<sup>65</sup> Also, in the selection entitled "Things to be Learned", children are reminded that one's duty to one's Maker is important in the list of necessary knowledge.<sup>66</sup> And, following a fable about a little dog who laments his uselessness to his master, this moral is drawn: "The poorest man may repay his obligations to the richest and greatest by faithful and affectionate service -- the meanest creature may obtain the favour and regard of the Creator himself, by humble gratitude, and stedfast obedience."<sup>67</sup>

Mrs. Trimmer is more insistently religious in her writing than Dr. Aikin. Although it is her History of the Robins which brought her fame as an author, she was also responsible for a fairly large output of texts to be used in Sunday Schools, among them six volumes devoted to "Sacred History".<sup>68</sup> These last, of course, were completely religious in nature, but she contrives to introduce pious



comments even into her books of history. When telling how Lucretia stabbed herself when faced with the prospect of having her name slandered, Mrs. Trimmer points out to her reader:

"Had Lucretia been a Christian, she would have known that it was her duty to bear slander with patience; but heathens were brought up with very proud notions, and thought it was noble to kill themselves when they were unhappy."<sup>69</sup> The History of the Robins

offers a natural opening for religious instruction since its theme is kindness to animals. Mrs. Trimmer rises to the occasion with enthusiasm, devoting three pages towards the end of the book to a lecture by Mrs. Benson which embodies the ideas of the author. Mrs. Benson explains to Harriet that God intended all His creatures to be happy and that the wanton destruction of their happiness contravenes His wishes. Furthermore, God intended that animals should contribute labour, service, and even their bodies to the welfare of mankind, but man must do his part by caring for such animals, and making them comfortable. Finally, even those animals which are "ferocious, noxious, and venomous" should be destroyed only if they actually interfere with the well-being of man or his useful animals.<sup>70</sup>

Mary Wollstonecraft does not confine herself to the treatment of animals as a basis for introducing religious teaching. Her feeling on the subject appears in the preface to Original Stories in which she states:

The tendency of the reasoning obviously tends to fix principles of truth and humanity





on a solid and simple foundation; and to make religion an active, invigorating director of the affections, and not a mere attention to forms. Systems of Theology may be complicated, but when the character of the Supreme Being is displayed, and He is recognised as the Universal Father, the Author and Centre of Good, a child may be led to comprehend that dignity and happiness must arise from imitating Him; and this conviction should be twisted into -- and be the foundation of every inculcated duty.<sup>71</sup>

And Miss Wollstonecraft makes good the promise of her preface throughout the book.

Maria Edgeworth and Thomas Day tend to avoid direct religious teaching in their works for children, for which evasion Maria Edgeworth in particular was severely criticized. Day tries to circumvent criticism of this sort by making the tutor, Mr. Barlow, a clergyman, and by having him explain at length to Mr. Merton his beliefs, which are all based on the Gospel.<sup>72</sup> Further, Harry Sandford, the companion of Tommy and pupil of Mr. Barlow, displays an amazingly good grounding in religious matters when he explains his refusal of the wine which Mrs. Merton offers him.<sup>73</sup> Having proven to his own satisfaction that he is a good Christian, Day continues his story with scarcely a mention of anything directly pertaining to God.

Maria Edgeworth goes further than Day, for she does not make any concessions to public opinion in the matter. She firmly adheres to the teaching of moral values, but does not reinforce them by any references whatever to spiritual authority. When the



famous critical journal, the Quarterly, lamented the lack of evidence that either she or her father was Christian, she made no public reply. Isabel Clarke, in her biography of Maria, states:

It is true that religion has been allotted a decidedly negligible role in the curriculum sponsored by Practical Education [a scheme worked out by Maria and her father] and it may be that the lack of any spiritual content in Maria's stories, ostensibly written for the moral guidance of children, had sometimes struck her readers with regret. In those days books intended for children were incomplete without some sharply stressed moral usually supported by a text of Scripture, and in this last respect Maria Edgeworth's tales were conspicuously lacking. The moral was there indeed but not the text.<sup>74</sup>

The redoubtable Mrs. Sherwood, however, more than makes up for any deficiency of "texts" in Maria's work. Not only does she quote from the Bible freely herself, but the Fairchild parents and their children are equally familiar with the Book. In an early chapter entitled "General Depravity of Mankind in all Countries after the Fall" they prove this fact in what appears to be a geography lesson. Mr. Fairchild has just been given a large globe of the world and proposes to instruct his children about the various nations who dwell on the earth.

And first he taught them that the globe was divided, by general agreement, into four unequal parts -- namely, Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. "Asia is that part of the world," said Mr. Fairchild, "in which the garden of Eden, or Paradise, was supposed to have been placed, where the first man, Adam, had lived."

Naturally enough one of the children wants to know where Eden was located, and Mr. Fairchild is off to a brief account of Adam and



Eve and original sin.

"Papa," said Lucy, "may we say some verses, about mankind having bad hearts?" "Yes, my dear," answered Mr. Fairchild. Then each of the children repeated a verse from the Bible to prove that the nature of man, after the fall of Adam, is utterly and entirely sinful.

The three verses follow, are re-emphasized by Mr. Fairchild, and the whole episode is concluded by the three children and their father kneeling to pray for "a knowledge of the exceeding wickedness of our hearts."<sup>75</sup> The foregoing incident is not by any means exceptional, but rather sets a general pattern for the rest of the book. The quotations from, and references to, the Bible are myriad, and these are reinforced by the continual presentation of religious principles in everyday language. This fact probably explains why The Fairchild Family is remembered as "Sunday reading" by many people even today -- one hundred and twenty-five years after the first volume was published.

A particularly interesting aspect of this didactic period is its militant exclusion of all other types of literature for children, particularly those which encourage the imagination of small readers. Even nursery rhymes disappeared from the printer's establishments. The result is a notable lack of variety. The situation is vividly revealed in a letter from Charles Lamb to Coleridge in 1802.

"Goody Two Shoes" is almost out of print. Mrs. Barbauld's stuff has banished all the old classics of the nursery; and the shopman at Newbery's hardly deigned to reach them off an old exploded corner of a shelf, when Mary asked for them. Mrs. B.'s [Barbauld's] and Mrs. Trimmer's





nonsense lay in piles about. Knowledge insignificant and vapid as Mrs. B.'s books convey, it seems, must come to a child in the shape of knowledge, and his empty noddle must be turned with conceit of his own powers when he has learnt that a Horse is an animal, and Billy is better than a Horse, and such like; instead of that beautiful Interest in wild tales which made the child a man, while all the time he suspected himself to be no bigger than a child. Science has succeeded to Poetry no less in the little walks of children than with men. Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil? Think what you would have been now, if instead of being fed with Tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history?

Damn them! -- I mean the cursed Barbauld Crew, those Blights and Blasts of all that is Human in man and child.<sup>76</sup>

Strong words, these -- yet Lamb himself was guilty of producing the same sort of writing against which he inveighs so bitterly here.

Mrs. Leicester's School and the moralistic Poetry for Children, which he and his sister Mary produced together, are unquestionably in the didactic tradition. The very fact that he would write them in spite of his personal convictions bespeaks the insistence of his publisher, Mrs. Godwin,<sup>77</sup> which in turn is a pretty strong indication of what the public was demanding. Lamb said on occasion that the poetry was "'written to order by an old bachelor and an old maid.'<sup>78</sup>

Some of the writers of the day were content to let their stand on non-didactic literature appear from their works. Others felt it incumbent upon them to express their disapproval of literature other than the type they produced. Mrs. Barbauld, for example, was rather doubtful about allowing children to read poetry. She praises the intention behind Dr. Watts's Hymns for Children, but



goes on to say:

it may well be doubted whether poetry ought to be lowered to the capacities of children, or whether they should not rather be kept from reading verse till they are able to relish good verse; for the very essence of poetry is an elevation in thought and style above the common standard; and if it wants this character, it wants all that renders it valuable.<sup>79</sup>

As to imaginative literature, Evenings at Home confirms the idea that both Aikin and Barbauld were on the side of the realistic and the factual. Even the one fairy story in Volume VI, a story entitled "Order and Disorder", tells of a heedless little girl named Juliet who is brought to an orderly state of mind by the two fairies, Order and Disorder, one of whom gives her apparently impossible tasks, while the other makes them simple through the exercise of orderly habits.<sup>80</sup>

Mrs. Trimmer was probably the most outspoken of the didactic writers against imaginative literature for children. In the periodical which she founded in 1802, entitled The Guardian of Education, she allowed herself free rein in attacking fairy stories in particular.<sup>81</sup> At first she objected to them on the grounds that they were "calculated to entertain the imagination, rather than to improve the heart or cultivate the understanding," but later when one of her correspondents brought it to her attention that Cinderella was "one of the most exceptionable books that was ever written for children" because "it paints some of the worst passions that can enter into the human breast, and of which [sic] little children should, if possible, be totally ignorant; such as



envy, jealousy, a dislike to mothers-in-law and half-sisters, vanity, a love of dress, etc., etc." -- when this aspect of the matter was brought to her attention, she entered into the fray with fierceness and authority to achieve the abolition of such dangerous literature. She now insisted that fairy tales were "only fit to fill the heads of children with confused notions of wonderful and supernatural events, brought about by the agency of imaginary beings." Even Robinson Crusoe was banned since his story might lead to "an early taste for a rambling life and a desire of adventures."<sup>82</sup>

Mary Wollstonecraft also, apparently, fears the harm which may result to little children from stories which border on fantasy, although her concern is with the lack of fidelity to fact in such tales. When Caroline of Original Stories asks permission to read Trimmer's The History of the Robins to little Fanny, Mrs. Mason replies, "Certainly, . . . if you can make her understand that birds never talk."<sup>83</sup>

Day and Edgeworth also voiced their disapproval of imaginative literature. Day considered fairy tales to be "fantastic visions" which were not "useful".<sup>84</sup> He accordingly avoids everything but the most realistic and factual material in Sandford and Merton. Maria Edgeworth, in the preface to The Parent's Assistant, from wisdom born of experience, no doubt, admits that it is important to hold children's interest, but she is quite explicit in condemning the imaginative and adventurous





type of story which she considers harmful. Such stories foster false hopes and give a deceptive picture of life.<sup>85</sup> It is interesting to note Miss Edgeworth's strong feeling on this point for in so many ways she seems to have been the exception to the rule among the didactic writers. At times one might almost wonder whether she should be treated as belonging to the same class as the other writers of her day. However, her rooted objection to imaginative literature, and -- even more important -- the frankly didactic purpose of her writing establish the justice of considering her one of the group of didactic writers.

Mrs. Sherwood's title to a place with the group has never been in question -- nor is it now. Although she enjoyed tales of fairies and other wonders as a child, she sternly refused to countenance them as an adult. In her adaptation of Sarah Fielding's Governess, she carefully removed all but one of the highly moral fairy tales which the original author felt satisfied to include.<sup>86</sup> As for the books read by the Fairchild children in The Fairchild Family, they all deal with ordinary people and ordinary events, or at least they avoid anything even bordering on fantasy. When Mr. Fairchild checks three new books which have been brought home for the children, he is pleased to bestow his approval as he sees "'they are written in the fear of God.'"<sup>87</sup> Such a comment from such a man assures the reader that the books are highly moral and satisfactorily devout -- in short, they are such books as any of the didactic writers might have approved.



FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

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15. Edgeworth, Maria, The Parent's Assistant or Stories for Children, London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1897, p. 3.
16. Ibid., p. 4.
17. Ibid., p. 3.
18. Ibid., p. 25.



19. Clarke, Isabel C., Maria Edgeworth, Her Family and Friends, London: Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., n.d., p. 43.
20. Sherwood, Mrs., The History of the Fairchild Family, London: James Nisbet & Co., Limited, n.d., p. 8.
21. As the book progresses, however, these chapter headings are dropped.
22. See p. 5.
23. Barbauld, op. cit., p. v.
24. Trimmer, op. cit., p. 13.
25. Ibid., p. 64.
26. Wollstonecraft, op. cit., p. 8.
27. Ibid., p. 40
28. Day, op. cit., pp. 7, 22.
29. Both Day and Maria Edgeworth's father were staunch supporters of Rousseau's educational theories.
30. Clarke, op. cit., p. 84.
31. Ibid., p. 34.
32. Edgeworth, Maria, "A Day of Misfortunes," Anthology of Children's Literature, ed. Johnson, Scott, Sickels, Second Edition, Cambridge; Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948, p. 1012.





33. Sherwood, op. cit., p. 149.
34. Ibid., p. 43.
35. Wollstonecraft, op. cit., p. xx.
36. Ibid., pp. 53-54.
37. Trimmer, op. cit., p. 43.
38. Ibid., p. 78.
39. Ibid., p. 103.
40. Day, op. cit., p. 4.
41. Clarke, op. cit., pp. 27, 35.
42. Edgeworth, op. cit., pp. 34-35.
43. Sherwood, op. cit., p. 43.
44. Ibid., pp. 43-49.
45. Trimmer, op. cit., pp. 14-17.
46. Ibid., p. 70.
47. See pp. 17-18.
48. Wollstonecraft, op. cit., p. 18.
49. Ibid., pp. 26-27.



50. Day, op. cit., p. 40.
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56. Ibid., p. 148.
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59. Sherwood, op. cit., p. 131.
60. Ibid., p. 135.
61. Sherwood, op. cit., p. 173.
62. Edgeworth, op. cit., p. 57.
63. Ibid., pp. 141-42.
64. Ibid., p. 142.
65. Aikin and Barbauld, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 44, 106-07.
66. Ibid., p. 93.
67. Ibid., pp. 126-27.
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71. Wollstonecraft, op. cit., pp. xviii-xix.
72. Day, op. cit., pp. 11-19.



73. Ibid., pp. 7-8.
74. Clarke, op. cit., pp. 105-06.
75. Sherwood, op. cit., pp. 14-15.
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77. The second wife of William Godwin.
78. Quoted in A Critical History of Children's Literature by C. Meigs et al, p. 91.
79. Barbault, op. cit., p. v.
80. Aikin and Barbault, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 19-29.
81. Muir, op. cit., p. 87.
82. All quotations in the paragraph appear in Darton, pp. 96-97.
83. Wollstonecraft, op. cit., p. 25.
84. Quoted from Darton, p. 147.
85. Edgeworth, op. cit., p. 4.
86. Barry, op. cit., p. 171.
87. Sherwood, op. cit., p. 88.





CHAPTER THREE

DEVELOPING MOVEMENTS

1780 - 1900



## DEVELOPING MOVEMENTS 1780 - 1900

A look at late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century England reveals a number of major movements or changes going on in that country. To relate them to the children's books of the period is not an easy matter, for their influences were widespread, and often the effect of one tended to militate against the effect of another, or on the other hand, to reinforce it, making it that much more powerful. Furthermore, movements by their very nature are dynamic rather than static, so that there is a continual change taking place, not only within particular movements, but in their combined effect. And finally, there is the complication supplied by the human factor, that is, by the author, whose individuality is bound to leave upon his work the impress of those ideas and attitudes peculiar to him.

Nevertheless, although an exact analysis of the part played by various factors is impossible, an examination of the various movements reveals a definite relationship between them and the literature being written for children during the half century of conscious didacticism from 1780 to 1830. Such a study does even more, however, for it throws light not only on the factors which conditioned the didactic literature of 1780 to 1830, but also on the developing influences which worked toward a liberation from didacticism following 1830. Since the development of these movements is one which, in cause and effect, extends throughout the entire period to be dealt with -- 1780 to 1900 -- each individual movement will be examined as a coherent whole.



LITERARY MOVEMENT -- NEOCLASSICISM TO ROMANTICISM

As has been pointed out by various critics,<sup>1</sup> neither the classic nor the romantic ever disappears completely from English literature. It is the emphasis which changes, the dominance of one or the other giving a particular period its distinctive character. Thus, although during the latter half of the eighteenth century definite romantic trends were appearing in the works of such writers as Cowper, Burns, and Blake, the century as a whole is usually identified with neoclassicism since it predominated during that time. Furthermore, neoclassic thought continued to influence the rather conventional middle class even in the early part of the nineteenth century when Wordsworth and Coleridge were becoming recognized poets in the literary world.

Evidence of this enduring neoclassicism appears in the very didacticism of the literature for children between the years 1780 and 1830, for it is clearly a reflection of the neoclassic idea that instruction is an indispensable ingredient of literature. As Odell Shepard points out in his survey of the neoclassic age,

Always remembering the Horatian maxim that literature should mingle the useful with the pleasing, the eighteenth century believed that utility is the more important of these ingredients. It revealed its Puritan backgrounds in its conviction that literature is no mere decoration of the fringe of life, that creative writing has a more important function than the amusement of lazy ladies and gentlemen, and that any writer worth his salt will of course be a teacher.<sup>2</sup>

One has only to look at the writing of Pope as he sets down the





standards for good writing and constructive criticism in his Essay on Criticism, or upholds the framework of society in his Essay on Man; one has only to browse through several numbers of the Spectator as Addison and Steele lead the public gently into habits of good thought and good manners; or to read the harsh satire of Swift as he strives to show man the error of his ways -- one has only to turn to any of the famous writers of the first half of the eighteenth century to see in action this urge to instruct. And as has already been pointed out in the preceding chapter, the writers for children were equally imbued with the importance of teaching.<sup>3</sup>

Neoclassicism did more than insist upon the importance of teaching, however. It established certain ideals for adult behaviour in a social world; it set a pattern to which the individual was expected to conform. Among other things, the adult was required to display carefully cultivated manners, to rely upon reason as a guide -- reason based on reality not imagination, to suppress rigorously any undue emotion, and to act willingly within a framework of conventions and moral rules which seemed best for the welfare of society.<sup>4</sup> These ideals of conduct would seem to have been influential in determining the content of the didactic children's literature discussed in the previous chapter. For example, the neoclassic influence would account for the emphasis on perfect manners which appears so insistently in children's books. It would also account to some extent for the hostility to stories



about fairies and witches, about geese which lay golden eggs, and magic caps which make the wearer invisible -- all obviously divorced from reality.<sup>5</sup> The preoccupation with moral qualities in juvenile books likewise gives evidence of a close link with neoclassic thought. Even the apparent coldness of the adult characters -- although here there is some room for doubt -- might be interpreted as a mask of laudable composure prompted by the eighteenth-century disapproval of any emotional display.

Apart from affecting the content of the didactic books, the goals set by eighteenth-century society may well have had another result. The time, experience, and effort necessary for reaching these goals relegated their realization to the adult period of life. Consequently, the child became a lesser being in the scheme of things, a being on his way to something of value, but unable to make any worthwhile contribution to society. And since the adult was held up as the crown of creation, the child was judged in accordance with his progress toward adulthood. He was a potential adult. His games and his fancies were tolerated but not encouraged -- and might be frowned upon by the sterner type of parent. The parent, conscious of his own maturity and greater experience, guided his child in all matters, including the books he read. On the question of books his judgment was in favour of the didactic -- and against the fanciful, the adventurous, and the nonsensical.

Although neoclassicism seems to have been the primary influence upon children's literature from 1780 to 1830, the



gradually increasing romanticism of the latter half of the eighteenth century was not without its effect. The concern over the welfare of the weak and the abused which is an integral part of the romantic attitude appears in the importance given to the kind treatment of animals,<sup>6</sup> and to alleviating the miseries of the poor through personal charity.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, romanticism was still a minor factor in determining the type of story to be offered children for their leisure-time reading.

As the nineteenth century progressed, however, the movement from neoclassicism to romanticism was continuing, romantic ideas and attitudes were becoming firmly established among all classes, and were setting the tone for society in general. Among the new ideas to take root was the conviction that writers should put the emphasis on giving pleasure to their readers, as opposed to the neoclassic emphasis on instruction in literature. This is not to say that the romantics had no interest in teaching their readers. Such a position would be completely indefensible, for obviously they had something to convey to their readers which they felt was important. But their themes and approach did not have so obviously, or so frequently, a didactic concern with the social mores, and they were very conscious of the importance of giving delight to their readers. Wordsworth, for example, says quite frankly in the preface to the Lyrical Ballads that he published them as an experiment to ascertain how much pleasure might be derived from them by the reader.<sup>8</sup> This was in 1790. In the





poetry of succeeding romantics, there can be seen an increasing preoccupation with giving delight to the reader.

Also characteristic of the Romantic School<sup>9</sup> was the tendency to emphasize the emotional, rather than the rational; to look for guidance to the heart instead of to the head since the heart represented the natural impulses of man's innate goodness; and to exalt the imaginative faculty. Man as an individual became more important than man as a member of society, so that there was no longer the same stress on conformation to a set pattern. Innate genius was felt to be superior to studied art. Another point is the tendency to idealize the child and childhood, a tendency clearly exemplified in the poetry of Wordsworth,<sup>10</sup> although it had appeared earlier in Blake's Songs of Innocence in 1789. The romantics were interested not only in man but in nature. They began to turn their attention more and more to nature as opposed to "The Town", and to find beauty and inspiration in peaceful rural settings, or grandeur and excitement in tempestuous seas and craggy mountain ranges. Lastly, they became interested in the past and welcomed enthusiastically the bringing to light of old songs and stories of other ages.

Not all these romantic characteristics are reflected directly in the children's books of the later nineteenth century, but some of them have an obvious and important influence. One such is the preeminence given to pleasure in literature. In children's books didacticism gave ground reluctantly,<sup>11</sup> but it did give



ground, so that with one or two exceptions the balance between entertainment and instruction was heavily weighted in favor of the former. Furthermore, such things as nonsense tales and nursery rhymes, which had been frowned on as lacking in instruction and therefore a waste of time, were welcomed back to the nursery for their entertainment value.

The new status of imagination also contributed much to books for children. When society accepted the idea that imagination was good and to be encouraged, the bann on fairy tales and fantasy was lifted. Even adventure stories such as Robinson Crusoe no longer aroused disapproval on the grounds that they led little boys to dream of faraway places and of situations removed from everyday life.<sup>12</sup> Obviously the changed emphasis from didacticism to entertainment along with the sanction of imagination had opened the way to an exciting variety in children's books.

After 1830 not only did romanticism have an important effect upon the character of books for children, not only was it influential in adding to the types of books available, but it had a profound effect upon the attitude to children in general. The belief that man is basically good, and that his natural impulses are equally good led to a more tolerant feeling toward children. Adults in general no longer viewed children and their activities with suspicion, no longer identified mischievousness with sinfulness. They attributed minor naughtiness to an excess of high spirits and were inclined to be indulgent as long as no real harm



was done. Aiding this more relaxed attitude was the individualism favoured by the romantics. If children were to be allowed to develop as individuals, eternal checking and correcting and disciplining must be dispensed with since such an approach to bringing up young people could result only in an artificial sameness. Furthermore, as long as children had been accepted as naturally good, it followed logically that they might safely be allowed to develop as nature prompted. In short, adults became less strict, less exacting, less vigilant.

Closely related to the concept of innate goodness, perhaps even stemming from it, was the idealization of the child and childhood. This attitude served not only to reinforce the effects already noted, but to extend them. For one thing, it converted the rather indulgent tolerance with which adults viewed the playing of youngsters into open approval. There seemed to be a feeling that here was not merely a potential adult, but a child, a special being with special thoughts and activities suited to childhood. This attitude gave a certain consequence to the ideas and preferences expressed by children, which in turn influenced the types of books written and published for them.

Children's preferences in the matter of leisure-time reading were not difficult to determine, for juvenile tastes seem to have remained fairly constant ever since the fourteenth century<sup>13</sup> -- although, with the exception of a brief period in the mid-eighteenth century, adults had shown little inclination to be





guided by them. Generally, it might be said these tastes were for stories of adventure, full of the dangers braved by heroes, of thrilling escapes, and of ingenuity in the face of apparently insuperable barriers. They wanted fairy tales which would allow young imaginations free rein -- tales of genii, and giants, and midgets, and magic. And during the reign of Victoria that is what they got.

The last development with respect to the changing attitude to the child was brought about in part by the importance given to the emotions by romantic thought. Deep feeling was to be encouraged, and it was no longer bad taste to express such feeling. The idealization of the child, along with the belief in his natural goodness also served to encourage parental love, and the result was -- at least in the realistic stories -- a more warmly affectionate relationship between parents and children.

Before leaving romanticism and its effects, the changing attitude of authors toward adult characters should be noted. With the waning of didactic purpose in books, and with the lessening of rigorous discipline, immediate and unquestioning obedience to parental authority was no longer a prime requisite. Therefore it was no longer necessary to encourage such obedience by depicting the unflinching perfection of the adults who represent authority. Adults became more human, but more lovable. Obedience was the result of love, rather than of duty, fear, or compulsion. It is hard to overestimate the influence of romanticism once it became well established.



RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT -- WESLEYANISM

The second major influence upon the didactic literature of the period stemmed from the Wesleyan movement with its intensification of religious zeal. The movement had its inception in Oxford in 1729.<sup>14</sup> John and Charles Wesley, along with countless other Englishmen, were beginning to feel a vague discontent with things as they were. The distrust of enthusiasm, and the unimpassioned reason of the age had had their effect upon the church, and for many people religion no longer provided the inspiration and spiritual satisfaction which they needed.<sup>15</sup> It was to satisfy this need that the Wesley brothers founded a small religious club which was dedicated to bringing its members closer to God. The young men followed a strict daily routine of prayer, Bible study, discussion of Bible topics, visiting of prisons, assistance to the poor, and personal discipline.<sup>16</sup> No luxury was permitted; all food and personal comforts were simple.<sup>17</sup> No time was to be wasted; every minute had to be accounted for to the other members.<sup>18</sup> Adherence to such a strict regimen required absolute sincerity, unalloyed enthusiasm, and complete singleness of purpose verging on fanaticism. Given these attributes, and a society disposed to accept what they preached,<sup>19</sup> it is not surprising that the young men should have exercised a rapidly increasing influence. Indeed, Methodism, as it came to be called, spread rapidly even after John Wesley's death in 1791,<sup>20</sup> so that it may be considered one of the outstanding influences on society in the latter part of the eight-



eenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, its effect was reinforced by a parallel evangelical movement taking place within the established church<sup>22</sup> since, to a large extent, their aims and ideals were the same.<sup>23</sup>

The most important effect of this religious revival was the increasing awareness of religion which permeated the daily living of a large segment of society. At first the influence of the Wesleyan Methodists was mainly upon the lower classes, people who had to a large extent been ignored by the Church previously, and who therefore offered the greatest scope for service and improvement -- important considerations with such a man as Wesley. He and his travelling preachers made their way amongst the workers in the new industrial areas in the north of England, and amongst the miners in Cornwall and Wales,<sup>24</sup> where their eloquent and emotional preaching exercised a tremendous appeal.<sup>25</sup> Although Methodism did not make a great deal of progress among the upper classes,<sup>26</sup> it was more and more influential among the middle class, until at the time of Wesley's death in 1791 Methodism was quite middle-class in its make-up.<sup>27</sup> The influence of this evangelical religion, then, spread into all classes of society and from there proceeded to make itself felt in most aspects of social living.

A second effect of the Wesleyan movement was to give a strong impetus to the various philanthropic ideas of the age. Wesley spoke vehemently against the frightful conditions in prisons and against the inhumanity of slavery. He deplored the sufferings





of the sick, and even set up a dispensary to provide free medicine to the sick and needy. He also threw his support strongly behind the attempt to educate the children of the poor in Sunday Schools. In the question of education, slavery, and prison reform, the weight of Methodist and Evangelical opinion was of considerable importance in the eventual amelioration of conditions.<sup>28</sup>

Although he did a real service to children by aiding in the establishment of numerous Sunday Schools for their education, Wesley's teachings have a good deal to do with an attitude to children which is not so unequivocally beneficial. There can be no denying that John Wesley loved children and got along well with them, but his theories concerning them were decidedly severe.<sup>29</sup> He believed that children are "born in sin and shapen in iniquity"<sup>30</sup> and that wise parents, therefore, should break the will of a child the first moment it became obvious the child had one. He considered leisure time neither more nor less than an invitation to the devil, an attitude which was reflected in the regulations of the school he founded at Kingswood in 1740. The children there rose at four, retired at eight, and in the sixteen hours between they spent their time eating frugal meals, doing school work, praying, engaging in meditation and self-examination, working in the garden, and walking -- always with a master present. There was no time for play, and no holidays were permitted.<sup>31</sup> Needless to say, these rules were later relaxed somewhat, although not during the lifetime of the founder. The important point, however, is the effect



upon the children of adults who followed the teachings of Wesley implicitly.

That the Wesleyan movement should exert a palpable influence upon children's literature is not surprising. Its effect was a general one, felt even by those who were not members of the Society. Furthermore, as has been noted,<sup>32</sup> its influence was greatest in the middle class, and it was to the middle class that the didactic writers discussed in the last chapter belonged. These facts would seem to account for the preoccupation with religious instruction which makes itself felt in many of the books of the didactic period. They help to explain the strictness and vigilance employed in dealing with children, and for the tendency to look upon time spent in childish pursuits as wasted. Finally, the influence of Wesleyanism might well explain why the humanitarianism of the Romantics is reflected in juvenile books at first only insofar as it concerns animals, and the poor and needy, and does not manifest itself in a softer, more sympathetic attitude to children in general until after 1830.<sup>33</sup> The Methodist conception of the sinful child seems to have successfully counteracted such sentimentalism before this date.

The more tolerant mood which gradually asserted itself in the second quarter of the nineteenth century would seem to have resulted from the lessening evangelistic approach to religion.<sup>34</sup> This is not to suggest that children's literature was not still essentially moral in approach. However, the insistence upon the



inherent wickedness of youth had for the most part disappeared. (This, as has been already noted, was in large part due to the influence of romanticism.). Practically all the stories<sup>35</sup> which dealt with real boys and girls accepted thoughtlessness and mischief, and even disobedience, as normal behaviour for children -- not to be approved, but not to be flatly condemned as evil. At the same time, children were led to a proper appreciation of virtue, and a realization that in time of trouble they should seek help and comfort from an all-loving God. The trend continued, until in the last half of the century books frequently appeared which made no direct reference to things spiritual whatever.

One other point which might be noted is the emotional appeal which was so much a part of the Wesleyan revival.<sup>36</sup> In this respect it tended to reinforce the romantic glorification of emotion, but as long as neoclassic ideas held firm it made no headway in children's literature. With the final ascendancy of romantic ideals, however, emotion and "enthusiasm" found their place in children's books.

#### ECONOMIC CHANGE

The period from 1780 to 1900 saw a number of important economic changes taking place, some of which, although exerting a comparatively small influence on juvenile literature during the first fifty years, were to prove quite significant during the ensuing seventy years.





One such change was in the size of the population. A decided increase had been noticeable from 1760 on, but it was particularly outstanding between the years 1801 and 1821, during which time the population of the United Kingdom increased from 14,000,000 to 21,000,000 -- a growth of fifty percent.<sup>37</sup> Since an important factor behind the rise in population was the improvement of living conditions in general, the increase was reflected in all age groups and all classes. However, a second factor weighted the increase in favour of children. This was the better medical and hospital care which was particularly efficacious in reducing the infant mortality rate, thereby increasing the proportion of children in the population.<sup>38</sup> As the number of children increased, the publishers became more and more interested in juvenile books,<sup>39</sup> for most of the children among the upper and middle classes were literate and provided therefore an increasingly worthwhile market. Furthermore, there was a considerable potential market represented in the mass of lower class children who were prevented at first by illiteracy and poverty from buying books. As the nineteenth century progressed, however, slow but fairly continuous progress was being made toward combatting these conditions.

The financial possibilities of the juvenile book trade were obvious, and it behoved publishers to take it seriously, to study how best to increase sales. During the earlier didactic part of the period under discussion, parents dictated what should be bought and thus influenced publishers in favour of didacticism. Later, when adults began to defer to the preferences of their



children, it was only good business for publishers to follow suit. In short, the economic importance of children was instrumental in bringing to the bookshelves books written for the delight of children rather than for their instruction.

Far more important than the upswing in population, however, was a change which was to transform completely England's economy. This was the industrial revolution. Although it was in full swing during the half-century from 1780 to 1830, it had little direct influence on the children's literature of that period. However, the way was being prepared for later developments in that direction. One of the most important effects of the industrial revolution from this point of view was the creation of a concentrated child-labour force. The factory-centered organization of industry had brought to the cloth towns and mining towns of England large numbers of laborers, drawn by the prospect of better wages, or forced from their country living by the trend to larger farms which was taking place in the rural areas.<sup>40</sup> The result was almost unbelievable crowding, with its attendant problems of dirt, disease, and vice.<sup>41</sup> For the children the situation was especially black. The higher wages which had attracted their parents proved to be chimerical, for the higher cost of food more than made up for the difference.<sup>42</sup> Survival demanded the efforts of the children to add to the weekly pay,<sup>43</sup> and so the youngsters came to be employed in the factories and the mines.<sup>44</sup> Working an average of fourteen hours a day, six days a week,<sup>45</sup> frequently half-starved, tyrannized over



by brutal foremen, in badly lit, poorly ventilated factories, with the ever-present danger of becoming entangled in machines, their lot was indeed pitiable. Furthermore such an existence often resulted in deformity and ruined health, if not in an early death.<sup>46</sup> Even their day off, Sunday, offered little compensation. There were no facilities provided for amusement or recreation, and the result was an early familiarity with drinking and its attendant evils.<sup>47</sup>

This state of affairs attracted the attention of a number of philanthropically inclined people. Some, such as Wesley and Robert Raikes, concerned themselves mainly with the spiritual welfare of these unfortunate children. Their contribution was the Sunday School which was designed to take the young people off the street, to give them religious and moral training, and to supply some instruction in reading and writing.<sup>48</sup> Others, among them Sir Robert Peel,<sup>49</sup> David Dale,<sup>50</sup> and Robert Owen<sup>51</sup> thought more in terms of physical welfare, and agitated accordingly for definite legislation to improve working conditions. The results insofar as they concern children's literature were two: one was the education of an increasing number of lower-class children who would otherwise have been illiterate; the second was an ever-widening humanitarian campaign to ameliorate the conditions under which child labourers worked and lived.

The direct results of this campaign have not a great deal of bearing on children's literature in general. They were very





slow to come, the first really effective legislation being the Act of 1833. The fact that a number of people were very active in agitating for reform long before this, however, is borne out by the report published in 1784 by Dr. Percival which led to a number of magistrates refusing to indenture apprentices to cotton mills.<sup>52</sup> This was followed in 1802 by the first Factory Act -- The Health and Morals of Apprentices Act -- which limited work to twelve hours a day for children, abolished night work, and provided for some sort of education. It proved useless since there were no provisions for inspection and enforcement.<sup>53</sup> Then came Robert Owen's bill in 1818, with amendments in 1825 and 1831,<sup>54</sup> also ineffective, and finally the Act of 1833 which put some teeth into the law by providing inspectors.<sup>55</sup> Reform now continued through act after act until in 1901 the minimum age limit for employment in factories was set at twelve.<sup>56</sup>

The importance to this study of the movement towards reform lies in the effect upon public opinion. A number of important and influential people lent their efforts to the cause over a long period of time. There were statesmen such as Shaftesbury and Owen, and writers such as Kingsley, Dickens, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning to mention only a few -- and they contrived to make people conscious as never before of the needs of children, not only for good food, clothing, and shelter, but for fresh air and exercise, education, and time for fun and play. Society was persuaded by such people that children deserved a childhood.





Another point of economic significance was the increasing wealth of England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Part of the increase was due to the eighteenth-century agricultural revolution.<sup>57</sup> During this period farms were increasing in size, fields were larger, new methods were being used to improve the quality and quantity of crops and livestock, and machinery was being introduced. The effect of these changes was to increase the output and bring to farmers an increased income from both domestic and foreign markets, while providing a greater store of food for the people of England. In addition, the resources of the New World were contributing their share to England's wealth.<sup>58</sup> Further, the factories of industrial England were pouring forth a steadily increasing volume of products which played their part in providing new wealth and more readily available produce to the people. The increased wealth of the upper and middle classes as a whole<sup>59</sup> meant that more money was available for such luxuries as books for children; and as the labouring classes eventually began to share in the distribution of this wealth in the mid-Victorian years,<sup>60</sup> poverty no longer was a deterrent to the potential market mentioned earlier<sup>61</sup> becoming an actual one.

One last point should not be overlooked. The fact that children were employed by factory owners to work beside adults, often doing much the same sort of labour as was required of their parents and working the same hours, served to strengthen the concept of the child as a small adult. It was only with the increasing



humanitarian agitation which has been noted above that this attitude gradually gave ground in the mind of the general public.

#### EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

Educational change operated in two separate fields -- the practical one of providing schools, and the more theoretical one of educational philosophy. Previous to the establishment of the first effective Sunday School by Robert Raikes in 1780,<sup>62</sup> the lower classes had little opportunity, as a group, for education. They had to rely on Charity Schools, Dame Schools, and Industrial Schools,<sup>63</sup> which taken together were still quite inadequate, not only because of the small number of students they could accommodate, but also because of the low quality of the teaching which existed in most of them. Best of the three were the Charity Schools whose sponsorship by individuals of a philanthropic bent, or by societies such as the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, made it more likely that the teacher hired would have some qualifications for his position. Unfortunately their sphere of usefulness was fairly well limited to the eighteenth century.

After 1780, the pathetically inadequate efforts of these eighteenth-century institutions were reinforced by Sunday Schools,<sup>64</sup> which, growing rapidly in number, did much to improve the situation but were still insufficient. According to the Parliamentary return for 1818, the number of Sunday Schools in operation was 5,463 with an enrollment of 477,225 students; by 1835, the number



of students had risen to 1,548,890.<sup>65</sup> The increase in literate children among the lower classes had in itself no noticeable effect upon children's books before 1830, but the problem of interesting the public in the establishment of Sunday Schools was drawing attention to the need for education among these children. Furthermore, the attendant publicity doubtless gave support to the efforts of those humanitarians engaged in pushing factory reform who, among other points, urged the necessity of providing schooling for children employed in factories.<sup>66</sup> Education was being brought to the forefront, and the movement was clearly toward general compulsory education. This goal was to a large extent realized through the Elementary Education Bill of 1870, followed by further legislation in 1880, 1891, and 1899, whereby elementary education was made completely compulsory for children five to twelve, and largely free.<sup>67</sup> With compulsory education and the consequent disappearance of illiteracy, the writing and publication of children's books could reach its full development. To write for children was not only a satisfying occupation, but could be a lucrative one -- and it attracted some of the most outstanding writers of the day after the middle of the century.<sup>68</sup>

Philosophical and educational thought can be related more clearly to the didactic literature for children during this period, although even here certain complications arise. One of the most troublesome is the inconsistency of human nature which is seldom willing to accept in toto the carefully developed





system of a philosopher. Not only writers, but the public in general, have no hesitation in selecting from a fairly cogent theory of education and child nature set forth by a particular philosopher one or two phases of his teaching, and fitting them into their own scheme of things -- even though in their new context they quite contradict the original intention of the creator. So it is that the ideas of such philosophers as Locke and Rousseau can be clearly discerned in the books of the didactic writers, contributing, if anything, to the qualities already noted as characteristic of the period. And yet, certain other ideas of the two -- especially of Rousseau -- are to be seen in the newer type of literature which was to follow 1830.

This rather paradoxical situation is illustrated in the fact that John Locke advocated that learning should be made as pleasant as possible,<sup>69</sup> that severe punishment should be avoided,<sup>70</sup> and that games<sup>71</sup> and an active life should be encouraged for children<sup>72</sup> -- all ideas which were to take root in the later nineteenth century. On the other hand, to the didactic writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, he clearly appears as a representative of the disciplinary theory of education.

The disciplinary theory of education<sup>73</sup> came into being in the seventeenth century when the strict linguistic and literary curriculum of the schools came under fire because it no longer could be defended on the basis of useful culture. Latin, which dominated studies, was no longer the language of diplomacy since



it had been replaced by French, and it was no longer the sole language in which was to be found good literature. However, it had become traditional over the past two centuries, and had behind it a firmly established content and method of teaching. Rather than throw all this aside, it was better to find a new argument to justify it. The argument came as the disciplinary theory of education.

The theory was simply that the process of learning, rather than the thing learned, was the important matter, for it was through the process of learning that the various faculties of the mind were exercised and developed for future use in adult life. To achieve an adequate development required fairly difficult exercises, a requirement which Latin seemed to answer. Locke approved of the basic idea of exercise of the faculties, but he criticized strongly the curriculum and method in use at the time.<sup>74</sup>

Locke's influence on public thought flourished undisturbed after his death in 1704, until the advent of the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau, especially of his Emile which appeared in 1762. Although Locke's teachings still continued to dominate, many of the ideas of Rousseau began to manifest themselves in somewhat modified form in England.

When seeking evidence of Locke's influence on children's books it is not always easy to decide whether certain features may be ascribed to Locke, or to Rousseau, or to either. Certainly Locke and Rousseau had a number of points in common in their philosophy of education. Both believed in education through a tutor



(although Rousseau preferred a parent to perform this office); both emphasized a sound physique as the basis for all education; both point out the fundamental importance of sense perception in all learning;<sup>75</sup> both recognize the child's need for activity, and so on. However, there are certain obvious and basic differences which may be used as a yardstick in deciding whether the author is a follower of the general thought of Locke or of Rousseau. One of these is that Locke believed in repressing natural desires unless reason seconds their gratification. As he says in Some Thoughts Concerning Education:

As the Strength of the Body lies chiefly in being able to endure Hardships, so also does that of the Mind. And the great Principle and Foundation of all Virtue and Worth is plac'd in this; That a Man is able to deny himself his own Desires, cross his own Inclinations, and purely follow what Reason directs as best, tho' the Appetite lean the other Way.<sup>76</sup>

Further on he continues:

It seems plain to me, that the Principle of all Virtue and Excellency lies in a Power of denying our selves the Satisfaction of our own Desires, where Reason does not authorize them. This Power is to be got and improv'd by Custom, made easy and familiar by an early Practice. If therefore I might be heard, I would advise, that, contrary to the ordinary Way, Children should be us'd to submit their Desires, and go without their Longings, even from their very Cradles. The first Thing they should learn to know, should be, that they were not to have any Thing because it pleas'd them, but because it was thought fit for them.<sup>77</sup>

Rousseau, on the other hand, feels that the natural desires of a child indicate the direction which Nature is taking,





and since a proper harmonious education must accord with Nature,<sup>78</sup> he would use these desires as a guide for the tutor. He wants Enile to feel free from restraint, able to enjoy the greatest good -- liberty.

Instead of allowing him to stagnate in the polluted air of his chamber, let him be taken out daily into the open meadow. There let him run and frolic and fall down a hundred times a day; so much the better, for by this means he will learn the sooner to pick himself up. The blessings of liberty are worth many wounds. My pupil will often have bruises; but in return he will always be in good spirits. If yours have fewer, they are always perverse, always restrained, always sad. I doubt whether the advantage is on their side.<sup>79</sup>

Locke suggests much the same activity for small children, but for reasons of physical health.<sup>80</sup> To increase further this feeling of freedom, Rousseau offers the following advice:

Offer to his indiscreet caprices only physical obstacles or punishments which result from his actions themselves, and which he recalls on occasion. Without forbidding him to do wrong, it suffices to prevent him from doing it.<sup>81</sup>

Closely associated with this point of view is the second fundamental difference between the two philosophers. Locke is far more willing to turn to authority<sup>82</sup> as a means of achieving the education of children than is Rousseau. Locke prefers that learning should be a pleasant affair with reason as the authority for action. However, he states that the age of reason is not attained early in life for most youngsters.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, the teacher must seek to form desirable habits in his pupil,<sup>84</sup> using as motivation punishment, praise, and authority. This theory he applies not only



to intellectual learning, but also to the learning of Virtue which he places first in importance<sup>85</sup> in the matter of education.<sup>86</sup>

Rousseau, in contrast, states emphatically that there must be no verbal command from the parent or tutor to do, or not to do. Make it impossible for a youngster to do something he wants to do, but never tell him he must not do it.<sup>87</sup> Let his own interest lead him to learn; never use authority to compel a reluctant scholar<sup>88</sup> -- and never impart knowledge unasked for. Even when the child does ask a direct question, help him to work out his own answer rather than give him the answer he wants immediately. The philosopher would prefer that nothing in the way of a formal education be given Émile before he is twelve years old,<sup>89</sup> at which time, according to Rousseau, his abundant physical and mental energy surpasses his own needs. This is the period -- from approximately twelve to fifteen years -- which should be devoted to labour, instruction, and study.<sup>90</sup> Émile's tutor is more of a companion than a tutor, a companion whose age and experience in fact give him a superiority but whose superiority in practice is not insisted upon.<sup>91</sup>

This attitude toward education is one of the most striking in its effects upon children's literature at the end of the eighteenth century. The philosophies of both Locke and Rousseau make their contribution in this respect, but whereas Locke's ideas are manifest in such works as those of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mrs. Trimmer, and Mrs. Sherwood, Rousseau's theories produced the Sandford and Merton of Day, and the books of Maria Edgeworth.



Trimmer and Sherwood, in particular, are concerned with the early training of children. They never tire of teaching, and preaching to, their little charges through the medium of parents. Religious training, moral training, social training, intellectual training -- all are approached with an enthusiasm for the task which would daunt most children. Furthermore, although both authors are willing to provide reasonable explanations for the behaviour which they require, it is clear that whether the child is convinced by reason or not he must bow to the authority of his parents and establish by repetition proper habits of deportment, etcetera.<sup>92</sup> This emphasis on deportment<sup>93</sup> is to be found also in Locke's treatise on education<sup>94</sup> -- one reason for his insisting that the tutor should be a man of the world with a wide knowledge of men and behaviour.<sup>95</sup>

The insistence upon authority, usually that of the parent, is also dominant in the books of Trimmer and Sherwood. Parents are omniscient and omnipotent -- and apparently secure in the approval of God. The children are never allowed to forget the vast distance between mere youngsters and their superior parents, and the parents themselves never forget their own dignity. If a child is recalcitrant, parents have a number of methods for applying pressure which they do not hesitate to use. In these books the authority which Locke preached appears with a vengeance.

Rousseau's voluminous writings contain a multitude of ideas which could not possibly be absorbed into the material of any





one book. Even less could they appear in a coherent and unified work, for Rousseau continually contradicts himself within his writings. So it is that those authors who are known to have been strongly influenced by Rousseau have produced quite dissimilar books, even more dissimilar than their differences of personality and background would lead one to expect.

While Locke was influencing the writings of Wollstonecraft, Trimmer, and Sherwood, the first important disciple of Rousseau among the writers for children was Thomas Day. Of this discipleship there can be no doubt, for Sandford and Merton is practically an English version of Emile. The points in Rousseau's philosophy which seem to have appealed particularly to Day include the importance of physical health which is to be gained through ample exercise, loose clothing which permits freedom of movement, plenty of sleep on a hard bed, and a certain amount of exposure to the elements to promote the toughening process which Rousseau so highly recommends.<sup>96</sup> He also emphasizes strongly the advantages of a life close to nature.<sup>97</sup> He approves of every man being able to earn his living by some species of hand work, be it carpentry, or farming, or any other such employment, so that he can make a contribution to society and not be a parasite.<sup>98</sup> And he tends to consider the poor superior to the rich, mainly as a result of the type of education which each is given.<sup>99</sup> However, he diverges from the teaching of Rousseau in encouraging little Tommy Merton to read<sup>100</sup> -- although Rousseau would heartily approve the fact that





Tommy himself decides to learn to read and does so with no compulsion outside of his own desire.<sup>101</sup> Further, Tommy's tutor, the exemplary Mr. Barlow, is far more apparent in the scheme of things than Rousseau would approve. He has that marked tendency of the didactic writers to launch forth into a long discourse on improving matters whenever the opportunity presents itself -- and the opportunity has a frequent tendency to do just that. However, it should be noted that Tommy's questions usually initiate any such discourse. As for the principle of isolating one's student from all society except that of a tutor, the common-sense Mr. Day ignored it as impracticable. With respect to Rousseau's recommendation that no attempt be made to impart religious training until the age of reason is reached,<sup>102</sup> Day seems to tread a middle course. As has been pointed out,<sup>103</sup> religion is discussed by Mr. Merton and Mr. Barlow at the beginning of the book, the latter proving himself beyond doubt a Christian clergyman. Then religion is set aside in favour of morals.

The effect of Rousseau's doctrine on Maria Edgeworth is far less obvious than on Day. For one thing, it was modified by her practical experience in raising the younger children of her father. Certain ideas which bear out the teachings of the French philosopher do appear to anyone who is seeking them, however. There is the exaltation of the poor but virtuous child, the enthusiastic championing of industry, and above all the shunning of compulsion. The lessons of Maria Edgeworth are nearly always



taught through the experiences of her characters, rather than through the preaching of a perfect parent -- the main exceptions being the "Rosamond" stories. Nor does the author, herself, resort to direct teaching -- doubtless one reason for the popularity of her stories. As to religion, Maria takes a far firmer stand than Day by excluding religious teaching from her moral instruction. In this, also, she was following Rousseau who refused to introduce religion to Emile until the boy had reached eighteen years of age. This exposed him to the wrath of most of the teachers in England and served to bury him under a deluge of pious pamphlets for the next twenty-five years or so.

In spite of this temporary eclipse<sup>104</sup> in England, Rousseau's ideas were still very much alive, and many of them appeared unmistakably later in the nineteenth century. One of these ideas which took hold in the latter part of the period was the belief in the innate goodness of man. As Rousseau stated it in Emile: "Everything is good as it comes from the hands of the Author of Nature; but everything degenerates in the hands of man."<sup>105</sup> Two other ideas which are of especial interest in this study also concern the attitude to the child and childhood. The French philosopher made his stand clear with respect to the latter when he criticized severely

that barbarous education which sacrifices the present to an uncertain future, which loads a child with chains of every sort, and begins by making him miserable in order to prepare for him, long in advance, some pretended



happiness which it is probably he will never enjoy . . . Love childhood; encourage its sports, its pleasures, its amiable instincts.<sup>106</sup>

He also led the way in making the child and his interests the guide for parents and teachers in their training. What the child learns should be determined by the interest of the child, not the authority of the adult.<sup>107</sup>

Rousseau's influence owes a good deal to his literary skill which recommended his books to the public. Their controversial nature then ensured wide discussion and wider reading. Many of his ideas received literary support from the romantics, a fact which also increased their influence. And finally, the adoption of a number of his educational theories by both educators and philosophers in the nineteenth century gave them a continuing and increasing influence. Monroe says in his Brief Course in the History of Education: "In Rousseau's teachings, notwithstanding their extravagance, is to be found the truth upon which all educational development of the nineteenth century is based."<sup>108</sup>

One of the important educational reformers to be influenced by Rousseau was Johann Bernard Basedow (1723-90),<sup>109</sup> a German professor of philosophy in a Danish academy. He had read Emile, and found it vastly interesting, so much so that he began to formulate in his own mind a practical scheme for putting the teachings of the book into effect. His proposals, which reflected faithfully the ideas of Rousseau, included such principles as following nature in educational practice, teaching through the senses and from natural





objects, dealing with children as children, and emphasizing physical training. His school attracted a good deal of attention, thereby serving to create a greater and wider interest in Rousseau's theories. A secondary result was the creation of a new kind of literature for German children by two of Basedow's followers -- Joachim Heinrich Campe and Christian Gotthelf Salzmann.<sup>110</sup> Basing their books on the idea of children being treated as children they produced such works as Campe's Robinson der Jungere, which was the model for Wyss's Swiss Family Robinson (1812-13).<sup>111</sup> The new books met with a good deal of criticism as well as praise; the German historian Schlosser says in his History of the Eighteenth Century:

They and their successors and imitators soon deluged Germany with a silly literature for children, and sought to bring up little children in such a way as to make grown people into children . . . . They put an end indeed to all pedantry, but we must ascribe to them and their plans the sauciness and pertness of that all-knowing and therefore ignorant and presumptuous generation of youths, who have been superficially educated by them, and of whom we have so many examples.<sup>112</sup>

The next important reformer was a young German-Swiss called Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827).<sup>113</sup> Filled with an intense sympathy for the poor, Pestalozzi felt that education was their only salvation. The main idea behind his teaching was that learning should be a natural process which takes its cue from the nature, not only of children in general, but of the individual in particular. According to Pestalozzi:

Man is similar to . . . a tree. In the new-born child are hidden those faculties which are to unfold during life. The individual and separate



organs of his being form themselves gradually into unison, and build up humanity in the image of God. The education of man is a purely moral result. It is not the educator who puts new powers and faculties into man, and imparts to him breath and life. He only takes care that no untoward influence shall disturb nature's march of development. The moral, intellectual, and practical powers of man must be nurtured within himself and not from artificial substitutes.<sup>114</sup>

Pestalozzi's method of achieving the mental, moral and physical development of students took into consideration the fact that children love to be active, that they have a large fund of natural interest in the objects and happenings about them, and that they have an innate desire to give and receive affection. Thus, in the schools of Pestalozzi there was a presentation of various subjects through carefully chosen activities and through the study of actual objects, with the learning motivated by children's interest.<sup>115</sup> And even more important, there was a relationship of sympathy and love between teacher and pupils, a "family" atmosphere.<sup>116</sup>

These ideas were slow to receive popular support, but after 1830 they spread amazingly<sup>117</sup> -- partly through the fairly considerable volume of his writings,<sup>118</sup> partly through visitors to his schools,<sup>119</sup> and particularly through his teachers,<sup>120</sup> who improved on his ideas and methods, and passed them on to others so that his influence was not only a wide but a continuing one. Added to the already important work of Rousseau and Basedow, his ideas and their practical application contributed appreciably to the changing attitude toward children.



The fact that this change was a continuing process throughout the nineteenth century owes something to the efforts of two other educational reformers whose influence did not begin to make itself felt until the latter half of the nineteenth century. The first of these is Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841).<sup>121</sup> What he did was to take the ideas that had already been introduced by such men as Rousseau and Pestalozzi, and after adapting them to his own theories, set down a sound scientific basis for them.<sup>122</sup> This scholarly and scientific statement of his theory, which embraced so many of the principles set forth by previous reformers, did much to give permanence to the new ideas; for when his work attracted the attention of the public through the work of a practice school established in 1885,<sup>123</sup> his carefully organized statement of the aim, content and method of instruction provided something concrete to grasp.

The second of the reformers, Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel (1783 - 1852),<sup>124</sup> is remembered principally as the originator of the kindergarten.<sup>125</sup> However, his theories also served to reinforce and extend certain ideas which affected the attitude to children and their doings. Having become interested in education through his work with Pestalozzi for whom he taught between the years 1808 and 1810,<sup>126</sup> he worked out his own theory and practice of teaching. It was the Lamarckian trend of his thinking which led him to the idea that the child works out its own development -- intellectually and morally and physically -- through self-activity.





From this concept of education, it followed that a good teacher would observe the voluntary action of the child, and then sustain and direct the interest which caused it in such a way as to create a "fuller harmony between the inner and the outer, between thought and external world."<sup>127</sup> Thus play, as the best expression of the child's natural interests became important.<sup>128</sup> And compulsion by the teacher, since it would prevent the indispensable purpose of education from being realized, must be avoided.<sup>129</sup> Everything must stem from the child. Childhood exists in its own right, and education, therefore, must concentrate on the present, rather than on some future adulthood.<sup>130</sup> In short, Froebel's ideas put the emphasis on the child's likes and dislikes, his interests, and his activities.

Looking back at the brief accounts of the educational reformers, one can see a general pattern of changing attitudes toward children which seems to parallel the changes in the literary, religious, and economic fields of thought. No longer are children miniature adults, or even adults in embryo. They are children who think and act in accordance with the laws of childhood. Their love for activity and laughter is not to be discouraged as being un-adult, but to be accepted as natural and therefore desirable. Severe discipline is to give way to a discipline of love in which children do what is right through their own wish. Their own interests are given respectful consideration.

This gradual but sweeping change depended not on the





efforts of any one man, but upon the cumulative effects of the teachings of a number of men, the most important of whom have been mentioned. Slow though it was to take effect, this revolution in thought was nonetheless effective -- and children's literature was not exempt from its influence. Books became freer, gayer, more interesting to children, less didactic.



FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. For example, Hudson, Arthur Palmer, ed. "The Romantic Period" The College Survey of English Literature, Shorter Edition, New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1945, p. 634.
2. Shepard, Odell, ed. "The Eighteenth Century", College Survey of English Literature, p. 449.
3. Doubtless reinforcing the neoclassic belief in instruction was the fact that most of the didactic writers of this period were personally concerned with the problem of education as such. Mrs. Barbauld taught for eleven years in her husband's school and contributed largely to its success. Mrs. Trimmer's efforts in the field of practical education were confined to teaching her six daughters and assisting in the education of her six sons. However, she wrote a number of texts for use in schools, was instrumental in setting up several Sunday Schools, and from 1802-1806 conducted the Guardian of Education, a periodical which proposed to examine and criticize books for children and books on education. Mary Wollstonecraft also taught for two years in a school established by herself and her sister. Thomas Day's activities in teaching were limited to his endeavours to educate a wife for himself, although he helped his friend Richard Edgeworth draw up a plan of education for the latter's son, a plan based on Rousseau's theories expressed in Emile. Maria Edgeworth was made responsible by her father for the education of quite a number of brothers and sisters. Furthermore, she and her father published two volumes on Practical Education -- a modification of Rousseau's theories. Finally, Mrs. Sherwood taught in a Sunday School before her marriage, and then continued her interest in education in India where she concerned herself with the education of soldiers' orphans in particular. (See D.N.B., s.v. authors' names).
4. Shepard, op. cit., p. 449.
5. It should be noted that at this period the belief in witches and demons, etc., had by no means disappeared from England, but was to be found among many of the rural people. The author of Little Goody Two-Shoes, published in 1767, devotes a number of pages to proving the foolishness of such beliefs which are held by the village people in the story. In other words, superstition was still a force to be combatted.
6. See Trimmer, Mrs. Sarah, History of the Robins, 2nd ed., Dublin: J. McMullen, 1821, pp. 63-64.  
Wollstonecraft, Mary, Mary Wollstonecraft's Original Stories, ed. E.V. Lucas, London: Henry Frowde, 1906, p. 6.  
Day, Thomas, The History of Sandford and Merton, London: J.F. Dove, 1833, pp. 4-5.



7. See Trimmer, op. cit., pp. 101-03.  
Wollstonecraft, op. cit., pp. 72-74.  
Sherwood, Mrs. Mary Martha, The History of the Fairchild Family, London: James Nisbet & Co., Limited, n.d., pp. 212-13.
8. Wordsworth, William, The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1944, Vol. II, p. 384.
9. Hudson, Arthur Palmer, op. cit., The College Survey of English Literature, pp. 634-35.
10. Wordsworth, William, "Maternal Grief", op. cit. II, pp. 51-54; "Intimations of Immortality", IV, pp. 279-85; and Books I and II of The Prelude, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926.
11. When moral didacticism seemed on the wane it was replaced for a period by the highly factual books of Peter Parley with their basic travel themes. Parley was American, but his success prompted a number of Englishmen to write under his name.
12. See p. 49.
13. Apparently young people had indicated their preferences as early as the fourteenth century, for writers in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries had felt it necessary to warn them against "fayned fables, vayne fantasyes, and wanton stories." (See Chapter I, footnote 10.) In the seventeenth century John Bunyan wrote: "I remember he the preacher alleged many a Scripture, but those I valued not;. . . What is the Scripture? Give me a ballad, a newsbook, George on Horseback or Bevis of Southhampton; give me some book that teaches curious arts, that tells of old fables, but for the holy Scriptures I cared not." (Quoted in Vera Brittain's In the Steps of John Bunyan, An Excursion into Puritan England, London: Rich and Cowan, 1950, p. 66.) In the eighteenth century, Richard Steele wrote in the ninety-fifth issue of the Tatler with regard to his eight-year-old godson: "I found he had very much turned his studies, for about a twelve-month past, into the lives and adventures of Don Bellianis of Greece, Guy of Warwick, the Seven Champions, and other historians of that age. . . . He would tell you the mismanagements of John Hickathrift, find fault with the passionate temper in Bevis of Southampton, and loved Saint George for being the champion of England." Laurence Sterne, too, indicated in The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy what boys were reading in the eighteenth century. Uncle Toby, in the process of defending his interest in the strategy of war, says to his brother, "'When Guy, Earl of Warwick, and Parismus and Parismenus, and Valentine and Orson, and the





Seven Champions of England, were handed around the school, -- were they not all purchased with my own pocket-money?" (See Laurence Sterne, The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, 4 vols., New York: The Clommel Society, 1904, p. 211.) And James Boswell writes in his London Journal, July 10, 1763: "'Some days ago I went to the printing office in Bow Church-yard, kept by Dicey, whose family have kept it fourscore years. There are ushered into the world of literature Jack and the Giants, the Seven Wise Men of Gotham, and other story books which, in my dawning years amused me as much as Rasselas does now. I saw the whole scheme with a kind of romantic feeling, to find myself where my old darlings were printed. I bought two dozen of the old story books and had them bound up with this title, Curious Productions." (Quoted in Cornelia Meigs' Critical History of Children's Literature, p. 61). A list of the "curious productions" follows which includes The Seven Champions of Christendom, Guy, Earl of Warwick, Dick Whittington, Johnny Armstrong, The Babes in the Wood, and The Friar and the Boy. Sarah Trimmer also remembered enjoying The Babes in the Wood, Mother Goose's Fairy Tales, the fables of Aesop and Gay, and Mrs. Fielding's The Governess, or Little Female Academy. (See Darton's Children's Books in England, pp. 79, 96.)

Among the romantics, Wordsworth and Coleridge also speak of boyhood reading. Wordsworth writes:

Oh! give us once again the wishing-cap  
Of Fortunatus, and the invisible coat  
Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood,  
And Sabra in the forest with St. George!

(See The Prelude, V, ll. 341-44.) And both speak fondly of the Arabian Nights. (See Prelude, V, ll. 460-63, and Coleridge, Ernest Hartley, ed., Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 2 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1895, p. 12.)

What children wanted was old romances, fairy tales, fables, ballads.

14. Winchester, C.T., The Life of John Wesley, New York: Macmillan Company, 1912, p. 27.
15. Ibid., pp. 78-79.
16. Southey, Robert, The Life of Wesley; and the Rise and Progress of Methodism, 2 vols., London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1820, p. 48.
17. Winchester, op. cit., p. 29.
18. Harrison, G. Elsie, Son to Susanna, the Private Life of John Wesley, London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson Limited, 1937, p. 85.



19. Edwards, Maldwyn, John Wesley, and the Eighteenth Century: A Study of his Social and Political Influence, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1933, p. 170.
20. A survey of church membership showed that in 1791 there were 56,195 members; in 1815 there were 181,709 (See Edwards, Maldwyn, After Wesley, A Study of the Social and Political Influence of Methodism in the Middle Period (1791-1849), London: The Epworth Press, 1935, p. 143).
21. Trevelyan, G.M., English Social History, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942, pp. 339, 362, 477, 494.
22. Lecky, William E. H., A History of England in the Eighteenth Century, New Edition, New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1903, Vol. III, p. 124.
23. Ibid., p. 126.
24. Edwards, After Wesley, pp. 85-86.
25. Lecky, op. cit., pp. 52-53, 66-67.
26. Ibid., p.121.
27. Edwards, After Wesley, p. 89.
28. Lecky, op. cit., p. 139.
29. Edwards, After Wesley, p. 102.
30. Quoted in Edwards' After Wesley, p. 100.
31. Southey, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 64-65.
32. See p. 66.
33. See pp.62-63.
34. Trevelyan, George Macaulay, English Social History: A Survey of Six Centuries Chaucer to Queen Victoria, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942, pp. 509, 564-66.
35. The main exception is Frederic W. Farrar's Eric, or Little by Little; A Tale of Roslyn School, Fifteenth Edition, Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1875, (See pp. 153-54.)
36. Lecky, op. cit., pp. 151-52.
37. Heaton, Herbert, Economic History of Europe, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936, p. 435.



38. Trevelyan, George Macaulay, History of England, New and Enlarged Edition, London; Longmans, Green and Co., 1948, p. 603.
39. Muir, Percy, English Children's Books 1600 to 1900, London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1954, p. 182.
40. Mantoux, Paul, The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century, trans. Marjorie Vernon, London: Jonathan Cape, 1928, pp. 187-88.
41. Ibid., pp. 441-42.
42. Ibid., pp. 433-436.
43. Ibid., p. 421.
44. Child labour was no new thing. Among the labouring class, children were expected to work as soon as they were able whether in a cottage industry or at farming. Such industry was approved by men like Daniel Defoe and William Pitt. However, in most cases, to work under the eye of a parent was a far different thing from being subjected to the relentless discipline of the factory. (See Mantoux, op. cit., pp. 419-24)
45. The figure given for Manchester. (See Mantoux, op. cit., p. 423.)
46. Mantoux, op. cit., pp. 423-27.
47. Cubberley, Ellwood P., The History of Education, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920, p. 617.
48. Ibid., pp. 617-18.
49. Mantoux, op. cit., pp. 482-84.
50. Ibid., pp. 477-78.
51. Ibid., pp. 479-80.
52. Croome, H.M., and Hammond, R.J., An Economic History of Britain, Revised Edition, London: Christophers, 1947, p. 212.
53. Loc. cit.
54. Ibid., pp. 212-13.
55. Ibid., pp. 213-14.
56. Ibid., pp. 299.





57. See Dietz, Frederick C., An Economic History of England, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1942, pp. 313-32, for account of Agricultural Revolution.
58. Ibid., p. 309.
59. As yet the labouring classes did not benefit from the increased wealth, except indirectly, (Ibid., p. 431). It was not until 1850 that there was any appreciable advance in real wages for the ordinary working man. (Croome and Hammond, op. cit., p. 293).
60. Trevelyan, English Social History, pp. 534, 558.
61. See p. 70.
62. Bready, J. Wesley, England: Before and After Wesley, London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1938, pp. 353-54.
63. See Cubberley, op. cit., pp. 447-52, for brief notes on Charity Schools, Dame Schools, and Industrial Schools.
64. A typical Sunday School is described in Mary Alden Hopkins' Hannah More and Her Circle, New York; Longmans, Green and Co., 1947, p. 106.

The Mores made the Sunday School sessions as entertaining as might be in those times. When the children were tired they stood up and sang. The first effort was to teach the children to read and to learn Scripture by heart. A penny a chapter was paid for proficiency in reciting such sections as the ninth chapter of Isaiah, the Beatitudes, and some of the Psalms. The early chapters of Genesis were read again and again to fix in infant minds the fall of man. The parables were in favor as a groundwork in teaching. . . . The children were taught cleanliness, decency, and honesty as a part of religion, and children who had never known school discipline endured the long sessions and the church services which were a part of the curriculum. All over England it was the same; rowdy, hard-boiled youngsters came week after week to learn to read, although the Bible is a far from easy primer.
65. Cubberley, op. cit., p. 618.
66. Mantoux, op. cit., pp. 483-84.
67. Cubberley, op. cit., pp. 642-44.





68. Such writers as Kingsley, Dickens, Thackeray and Ruskin lent a certain prestige to children's literature through their children's books.
69. Locke, John, Some Thoughts Concerning Education, London: Cambridge University Press, 1934, p. 31.
70. Ibid., p. 30.
71. Ibid., pp. 87-88.
72. Ibid., p. 55.
73. Monroe, Paul, A Text-Book in the History of Education, New York: Macmillan Company, 1911, pp. 505-06.
74. Cubberley, op. cit., p. 435.
75. It might be noted that sense perception was not a new idea in the philosophy of education. It had been stressed by Comenius (1592-1670), and had found expression in his popular text familiarly called the Orbis Pictus which was used to teach Latin from pictures. Objects in the picture were numbered and their names appeared in the vernacular text in the left-hand column below, the corresponding Latin being in the right-hand column.
76. Locke, op. cit., p. 21.
77. Ibid., pp. 25-26.
78. Rousseau, Jean Jacques, Rousseau's *Émile* or Treatise on Education, trans. William H. Payne, New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1907, p. 3.
79. Ibid., pp. 43-44.
80. Locke, op. cit., pp. 6-7.
81. Rousseau, op. cit., p. 47.
82. Locke, op. cit., pp. 57-60.
83. Ibid., pp. 60-61.
84. Quick, R.H., ed. "Introduction", *Émile*, p. liv.
85. Locke, op. cit., p. 115.



86. It is interesting to note that Mary Wollstonecraft, who is spoken of in D.N.B. as a great admirer of Rousseau, writes a preface to her Original Stories which is far closer to Locke than Rousseau. Addressing herself to parents, she says:  
These conversations and tales are accommodated to the present state of society; which obliges the author to attempt to cure those faults by reason, which ought never to have taken root in the infant mind. Good habits, imperceptibly fixed, are far preferable to the precepts of reason; but, as this task requires more judgment than generally falls to the lot of parents, substitutes must be sought for, and medicines given, when regimen would have answered the purpose much better. I believe those who examine their own minds, will readily agree with me, that reason, with difficulty, conquers settled habits, even when it is arrived at some degree of maturity; why then do we suffer children to be bound with fetters, which their half-formed faculties cannot break.  
(See Wollstonecraft, Mary, Mary Wollstonecraft's Original Stories, ed. E.V. Lucas, London: Henry Frowde, 1906, p. xvii.)
87. Rousseau, op. cit., p. 55.
88. Ibid., p. 145.
89. Ibid., p. 59.
90. Ibid., p. 133.
91. Ibid., p. 87.
92. See pp. 23, 29.
93. Rousseau opposes Locke in the question of manners. He feels that to insist on conventional manners is to encourage insincerity (op. cit., pp. 48, 205.); and furthermore, a knowledge of the world of men is just what a child does not need. It is for this reason that Rousseau isolates Emile completely from society.
94. Locke, op. cit., pp. 69-71.
95. Ibid., p. 71-72.
96. Rousseau, op. cit., pp. 90-96.
97. Ibid., p. 24.
98. Ibid., pp. 174-80.



99. Ibid., p. 20.
100. Ibid., p. 81.
101. Ibid., p. 82.
102. Ibid., p. 230.
103. See p. 44.
104. Doubtless a good deal of Rousseau's unpopularity in England was due to his revolutionary political ideas which many people blamed as contributing to the French Revolution. They feared a similar outbreak of violence in England.
105. Rousseau, op. cit., p. 1.
106. Ibid., pp. 44-45.
107. Ibid., p. 82.
108. Monroe, Paul, Brief Course in the History of Education, New York: Macmillan Company, 1912, p. 295.
109. See Cubberley, op. cit., pp. 534-38 for account of Basedow.
110. Monroe, A Text-Book in the History of Education, p. 579.
111. Ibid., p. 583.
112. Quoted in Monroe, A Text-Book in the History of Education, p. 580.
113. See Cubberley, op. cit., pp. 539-46, and Monroe, Text-Book in the History of Education, pp. 597-622, for account of Pestalozzi.
114. Monroe, Text-Book in the History of Education, pp. 611-12.
115. Ibid., pp. 618-20.
116. Ibid., p. 621.
117. Monroe, Brief Course in the History of Education, p. 343.
118. Cubberley, op. cit., p. 539.
119. Ibid., p. 544.
120. Ibid., p. 545.





121. See Cubberley, op. cit., pp. 759-64, and Monroe, Text-Book in the History of Education, pp. 622 ff. for account of Herbart.
122. Monroe, Text-Book in the History of Education, p. 626.
123. Cubberley, op. cit., p. 762.
124. See Monroe, Text-Book in the History of Education, pp. 642-67, for account of Froebel.
125. Cubberley, op. cit., pp. 764-65.
126. Monroe, Text-Book in the History of Education, p. 643.
127. Ibid., p. 657.
128. Monroe, Brief Course in the History of Education, p. 339.
129. Ibid., p. 337.
130. Ibid., p. 338.



CHAPTER FOUR

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

1830 - 1900



## CHILDREN'S LITERATURE 1830 - 1900

Although didactic literature continued to dominate the publishers' offerings to children until around 1830, the beginning of the nineteenth century saw some gleams of lighter, gayer writing, mainly in the realm of verse. Technically this new development has no place in a study which is concerned with children's prose, but to ignore the poems which appeared in the first three decades of the nineteenth century is to give the false impression of a sudden change in books for children after 1830; whereas, in actual fact these poetic forerunners of the change to come had appeared as early as 1805. Therefore a brief look at some of the more famous poems seems advisable.

One of the earliest was Old Mother Hubbard, a nonsensical poem about the doings of Mother Hubbard and her dog, published in 1805.<sup>1</sup> It was written by Sarah Catherine Martin, who illustrated it herself with sketches of a plump and jovial Mother Hubbard, and an intellectual-looking dog with unbelievable ears.<sup>2</sup> Since its first appearance it has become a stand-by in every book of nursery rhymes. Here was pure entertainment, and the children loved it, judging by its sales.<sup>3</sup>

More important, because more influential, was The Butterfly's Ball (1807) by William Roscoe. This delightful poem rollicks along in its own way with no suggestion of imparting either information or morals. William Roscoe wrote it, not for publication, but simply to please his small son on the latter's birthday. It was later set to music at the wish of the Royal Family, and then



published.<sup>4</sup> The gay beginning seems meant to be sung.

"Come take up your Hats, and away let us haste  
To the Butterfly's Ball, and the Grasshopper's Feast.  
The Trumpeter, Gadfly, has summon'd the Crew,  
And the Revels are now only waiting for you."<sup>5</sup>

The poem caught the public fancy immediately, its success encouraging many other writers to attempt the same sort of thing. Mrs. Dorset wrote The Peacock "At Home", and The Lion's Masquerade;<sup>6</sup> W.B. wrote The Elephant's Ball,<sup>7</sup> and a whole host of other writers brought forth comparable titles. Together The Butterfly's Ball and The Peacock "At Home" sold over 40,000 copies within the first year of their publication<sup>8</sup> -- a fair indication that there was a public interested in fun unadulterated with moral teaching.

Three popular nonsense books appeared in the 1820's:  
The History of Sixteen Wonderful Old Women (1821), Dame Wiggins of Lee and her Seven Wonderful Cats (1823), and Deborah Dent and her Donkey (1823). The limerick stanza form, which lends itself so well to humour, is believed to have made its first appearance in The History of Sixteen Wonderful Old Women.<sup>9</sup> The unknown author must have enjoyed himself, for he handles the form with enthusiasm and vigor. Here is the account of the Old Woman of Croydon.

There was an Old Woman of Croydon  
To look young she affected the Hoyden  
And would jump and would skip,  
Till she put out her hip;  
Alas! poor Old Woman of Croydon.<sup>10</sup>

Dame Wiggins of Lee seems to have had a continuing popularity, for in 1885 it attracted Ruskin to such an extent that he was instrumental in having a new edition published which contained several





additional stanzas of his own composition, the latter being illustrated by Kate Greenaway.<sup>11</sup> As for Deborah Dent and her Donkey, no one could wish for happier nonsense.

Not only in poetry, however, was there an indication of a new spirit at work. During the years 1823-26, Edgar Taylor's translation of German Popular Stories was published in England. This famous collection of folk tales made by the Grimm brothers was given an enthusiastic welcome in spite of its highly fanciful and unimproving nature, and although it was originally intended for adults, soon became a part of the nursery library, and has remained a favorite with children ever since.<sup>12</sup> The very fact that it was accepted as children's literature bespeaks a new attitude to literature and to children.

In the years following 1830, a different attitude toward children's books, one which had been no more than suggested by the nonsense poems of the preceding years and by the acceptance of Grimm's Tales, became more and more apparent. Furthermore, the tendency to branch out into different types of literature (as evidenced by the nonsense poems and fairy tales) became more definite, and certain classes of stories were gradually established. The realistic story based on home life, the adventure story, the fairy tale and fantasy, and the boys' school story -- one after another they consolidated their position in the world of books for young people.<sup>13</sup> It is under these headings that the books of the new period are to be examined.



## REALISTIC STORY OF HOME LIFE

The realistic story based on the everyday lives of children and their parents was not a new type. Indeed, as indicated in Chapter II, it was the favorite, almost the only type of story written by the didactic authors there treated. For this very reason, the contrasts between the newer type of realistic story and the older one become particularly significant in revealing the change taking place in children's literature.

The first and most remarkable of the new realistic stories is Holiday House by Catherine Sinclair. Written in 1839, at a time when Mrs. Sherwood was still deep in the doings of the Fairchild family,<sup>14</sup> it stands out clearly as a definite departure from what most writers of realistic stories were producing -- and its immediate popularity and ensuing editions make it impossible to overlook. One of its most striking features is the lessening of the didactic emphasis. In the preface, Miss Sinclair stands out strongly against the never ending process of education to which children are subjected.

The minds of young people are now manufactured like webs of linen, all alike, and nothing left to nature. From the hour when children can speak, till they come to years of discretion or of indiscretion, they are carefully prompted what to say, and what to think, and how to look, and how to feel; while in most schoolrooms Nature has been turned out of doors with obloquy, and Art has entirely supplanted her.<sup>15</sup>

She then directs her criticism more specifically against those



books which she considers to be dryly informative and unsuited to the tastes of children.

. . . therefore, while such works are delightful to the parents and teachers who select them, the younger community are fed with strong meat instead of milk, and the reading which might be a relaxation from study becomes a study in itself.<sup>16</sup>

Holiday House does, in fact, contain a good deal of improving material, but it avoids a preoccupation with faults and prefers to encourage "germs of high and generous feeling, and of steady, right principle,"<sup>17</sup> besides including much which is intended to be "delightful" to children.

No less striking than its comparative lack of didacticism is the attitude which it reveals toward children. In the original preface, the author states that she "has endeavoured to paint that species of noisy, frolicsome, mischievous children, now almost extinct, wishing to preserve a sort of fabulous remembrance of days long past, when young people were like wild horses on the prairies", for these she prefers to "well-broken hacks on the road."<sup>18</sup> The extreme to which Miss Sinclair is willing to go in creating such youngsters appears in the following brief account of the two children, Laura and Harry, around whom the story is woven.

Harry and Laura were proceeding directly towards the nursery, as Frank had recommended, when unluckily they observed in passing the drawing-room door, that it was wide open; so Harry peeped in, and they began idly wandering round the tables and cabinets. Not ten minutes elapsed before they both commenced racing about as if they were mad, perfectly screaming with joy, and laughing so loudly at their own funny





tricks, that an old gentleman who lived next door very nearly sent in a message to ask what the joke was.

Presently Harry and Laura ran up and down stairs till the housemaid was quite fatigued with running after them. They jumped upon the fine damask sofas in the drawing-room, stirred the fire till it was in a blaze, and rushed out on the balcony, upsetting one or two geraniums and a myrtle. They spilt Lady Harriet's perfumes over their handkerchiefs, -- they looked into all the beautiful books of pictures, -- they tumbled many of the pretty Dresden china figures on the floor, -- they wound up the little French clock till it was broken, -- they made the musical work-box play its tunes, and set the Chinese mandarins a-nodding, till they very nearly nodded their heads off. In short, so much mischief has seldom been done in so short a time, till at last Harry, perfectly worn out with laughing and running, threw himself into a large arm-chair, and Laura, with her ringlets tumbling in frightful confusion over her face, and the beads of her coral necklace rolling on the floor, tossed herself into a sofa beside him.

"Oh! what fun!" cried Harry, in an ecstasy of delight.<sup>19</sup>

They finish their naughtiness by inviting, without permission, all their friends to come for tea the next day.

When Mrs. Crabtree, their nurse in whose care they have been left for several days, learns of the situation, retribution descends heavily upon them. To their great shame and embarrassment, no tea is provided, and later on they are severely scolded, whipped, and put to bed. However, several days later when their Uncle David, and their grandmother, Lady Harriet, return, <sup>their</sup>uncle makes a joke of the whole affair.

In Mrs. Crabtree's eyes, every fault is to be punished at once and severely, no matter what it is. Uncle David, on the



other hand, is inclined to be quite lenient with the majority of the children's misdemeanours. As he explains to them on one occasion:

"I am not so seriously angry at the sort of scrapes Laura and you get into, because you would not willingly and deliberately do wrong. If any children commit a mean action, or get into a passion, or quarrel with each other, or omit saying their prayers and reading their Bibles, or tell a lie, or take what does not belong to them, then it might be seen how extremely angry I could be; but while you continue merely thoughtless and forgetful, I mean to have patience a little longer, before turning into a cross old uncle, with a pair of tawse."<sup>20</sup>

That Uncle David's system is far better than Mrs. Crabtree's, is made clear very early in the book, for "in spite of Mrs. Crabtree's admirable 'system' with children, Harry and Laura became . . . two of the most heedless, frolicsome beings in the world, and had to be whipped almost every morning", while "when Lady Harriet and Major Graham [Uncle David] spoke kindly to Harry and Laura about anything wrong that had been done, they both felt more sad and sorry, than after the severest punishments of Mrs. Crabtree."<sup>21</sup> In the author's estimation discipline through love was obviously far more effective than any other type.

Not only is there a difference in the attitude to children in Holiday House but also in the conception of adult characters. Mrs. Crabtree, the symbol of nursery authority, is not the awesome and dignified figure one would have expected had she appeared in the works of such writers as Mrs. Trimmer or Mrs. Sherwood. Instead she is at times almost a figure of fun, at whose expense Uncle David



does not hesitate to make jokes. Furthermore, the author's desire for realistic characterization leads her to avoid depicting even Major Graham and his mother as perfect adults. She suggests that they are overly lenient with Laura and Harry, and that perhaps Mrs. Crabtree's strictness is a necessary corrective to their spoiling.<sup>22</sup> And on one occasion, Major Graham is nearly guilty of a gross injustice to a poor boy whom he condemns without even seeing. Luckily he discovers his error, and admits it handsomely, pointing it out to Harry as an excellent object lesson in what not to do.<sup>23</sup>

The final point to be considered with respect to Holiday House is its religious content. Here there is a much closer relationship between the old and the new, for although the story starts out rather gayly and irresponsibly, the author very soon declares herself in favour of a religious education.

Never was there a more amiable, pious, excellent boy than Frank, who read his Bible so attentively, and said his prayers so regularly every morning and evening, that he soon learned both to know his duty and to do it.<sup>24</sup>

As the story goes on, religious passages become more frequent, until at the end of the book when Frank comes home to die, the last thirty pages are taken up with an account of his efforts to give up the things of this world, and to resign himself and prepare his soul for death.

Starting her writing career somewhat later in the nineteenth century than Catherine Sinclair was Charlotte M. Yonge. Her first book, Abbeychurch, was published in 1844 and she continued on





to write over one hundred and twenty books before her death in 1901. Her books about family life were read by both adults and young girls, the latter having been more or less ignored by authors in previous years. Typical of her work is The Daisy Chain (1856), a story of a large and appealing family who take to the missionary field in the Loyalty Islands. Like most of her writing it embodies her belief in Christianity and Christian principles, but religious or moral teaching is far from its raison d'être.<sup>25</sup>

In her attitude to the child characters she creates Miss Yonge follows the lead of Catherine Sinclair in making them a combination of basic goodness and human naughtiness. Ethel May of The Daisy Chain is, according to Anne Eaton, "harum-scarum, impulsive, quick-tempered, but thoroughly lovable."<sup>26</sup> Such characterization suggests an understanding of the nature of children as well as a sympathy with them. The author's concern with realistic characterization is also extended to the adults in the story. She depicts Dr. May as being "generous, kind, impulsive, humourous and understanding, sometimes impatient but quick to acknowledge when he is wrong."<sup>27</sup> The perfect adult has no place in Charlotte Yonge's books.

Finally, although there is a pervasive religious flavour to her stories, they are never allowed to become heavily pious. Religion is a cheerful affair which fits into the daily routine of living and provides a good deal of interest for family conversation.

It expresses itself in The Daisy Chain through her belief in a good Christian life, her dependence on the Church, and through her interest in foreign missions and Sunday Schools.





A third important writer of realistic stories in the nineteenth century is Juliana Horatia Ewing. Mrs. Ewing is even less of a teacher than Catherine Sinclair and Charlotte Yonge. Her delight seems to lie in painting word pictures of lovely gardens and engaging rustic characters. Examples of her realistic stories are abundant, but three of the most popular are Lob Lie-by-the-Fire (1873), Jackanapes (1879), and Jan of the Windmill (1872-73). The last of these, which is somewhat longer than the others gives a fair idea of her attitude to many things. It is the story of a little baby, Jan, who is left with a miller and his wife by an obviously well-to-do gentleman who guards his identity with the greatest care. The reader gathers the gentleman is the father of the child, but can only conjecture what leads him to abandon little Jan. Such a situation provides the perfect opportunity for preaching, or would if the author were so inclined. Mrs. Ewing, however, prefers merely to observe and record, not judge.

In dealing with the children who appear in the pages of her books, Mrs. Ewing seems to favor situations which allow them a certain degree of independence. Such is the case with Jan. He is brought up, not by a middle-class family, but by a family of the lower class. The miller and his wife have to work hard for their living and have little time for the children, so that the young ones are allowed to play pretty much at will until they are old enough to help with the work. The result is that Jan grows up



with very little supervision other than that supplied by his slightly older foster-brother, Abel, who worships the little boy. Jan seldom comes into conflict with his elders, for the miller has no time for him, and his mother is unable to refuse him anything. Even his independent turn of mind is seldom checked and he wanders as he wishes, even from a very early age.

He was no sooner firmly established on his own legs, with the power of walking, or rather toddling, independent of help, than he took to making expeditions on the downs by himself. He would watch his opportunity, and when his foster-mother's back was turned, and the door of the round-house opened by some grist-bringer, he would slip out and toddle off with a swiftness decidedly dangerous to a balance so lately acquired.

Sometimes Mrs. Lake would catch sight of him, and if her hands were in the wash-tub, or otherwise engaged, she would cry to the nurse-boy, "Abel, he be off! Jan's off!" A comic result of which was that Jan generally announced his own departure in the same words, though not always loud enough to bring detection upon himself.

When his chance came and the door was open, he would pause for half a moment on the threshold to say, in a tone of intense self-satisfaction, "He be off, Abel! Janny's off!" and forthwith toddle out as hard as he could go. As he grew older he dropped this form, but the elfish habit of appearing and disappearing at his own whim was not cured.<sup>28</sup>

The same independent spirit appears later when Jan decides to tend pigs instead of returning to school. He hires himself out, driving a fair bargain with respect to wages, and then returns to tell his foster parents what he has done. Mrs. Lake is inclined to object, but Jan convinces her to let him have his own way.

From the point of view of the didactic writers Jan should



doubtless come to a bad end. He is left on his own with very little parental supervision. His mother is indulgent. He has little conception of authority in the person of adults, or of obedience on his part. He apparently has little respect for education. However, Jan's story belongs to the latter part of the nineteenth century, not of the eighteenth century, and instead of condemning the boy and his upbringing, the author obviously delights in his individuality and initiative. And although she may not commend his behaviour at all times, accepts it -- and concludes her story with Jan as a famous artist.

Like the other writers of realistic stories just considered, Mrs. Ewing believes in creating rounded characters, never all good nor all bad. She delights in giving to a character who appeals to her all sorts of noble characteristics, but never fails to add the leaven of human error to make him live. Such a character is the old schoolmaster in Jan of the Windmill. She paints him as kind, scholarly, poetic, high-principled, and then shows how wrong he is in refusing to admit the artistic genius of little Jan, in insisting that the boy keep his painting for his leisure hours and concentrate on learning a trade which will ensure his making a living. In the same way even her more unpleasant characters are painted grey rather than black, and are described in a gently humorous way which makes them as real and as believable as the more virtuous characters. There can be no doubt that Mrs. Ewing is more of an artist than any of the other writers of realistic





stories here considered.

She has the same artistry in dealing with religion. She does not feel that she has to teach religion, but brings it in as part of the picture of life. The miller and his wife are not church-goers; so it is not surprising that little Jan does not worry his head over such matters. The schoolmaster, however, is the clerk of the church, and through him the subject of religion arises. He asks Jan:

"Do ye any of ye come to church?"

"My father does on club-days," said Jan.

"And the rest of ye -- do ye attend any place of worship?" Jan shook his head.

"And I'll dare to say ye didn't know I was the clerk," said Master Swift. "There's paganism for ye in a Christian parish! Well, well, you're coming to me, lad; and, apart from your secular studies, you'll be instructed in the Word of God, and in the Church Catechism on Fridays."<sup>29</sup>

Since the schoolmaster is always in character, it is to be expected that as the clerk of the church he would allude to spiritual matters from time to time, and in his own peculiar way he does.

The Rector might also be expected to voice a concern with spiritual matters, but Mrs. Ewing's conception of his character is of a good man and a learned one, but not an active parson.

He does heroic work in tending those who are stricken by the plague, but he dispenses little in the way of sermons. There is no question, here, of religious didacticism being allowed to interfere with artistic characterization.

The last of the writers of realistic stories to be dealt



with is Mrs. Molesworth. Mrs. Molesworth wrote about the same time as Mrs. Ewing, but her books were popular with a somewhat younger set than that which enjoyed Jan of the Windmill. Of her realistic stories, one of the best known is Carrots, Just a Little Boy (1876). Intended for quite small children, it tells of the everyday life of a little boy and his older sister. The events are not particularly exciting or dramatic, but are of the sort which occur in most children's lives at one time or another -- a misunderstanding about some lost money, the failure to be met at the end of a trip, the brief visit of some small relation. Their very ordinariness gives the story the ring of realism.

There is no obvious moralizing in the book, no purposeful teaching. Both Carrots and Floss are too good to need correction so that only indirectly through example might they be said to provide improvement to young readers. Indeed, Mrs. Molesworth's purpose is apparent in what she herself says to her readers:

I am telling you the history of a real little boy and girl, not fancy children, and that is why, though there is nothing very wonderful about Floss and Carrots, I hope the story of their little pleasures and sorrows and simple lives may be interesting to you.<sup>50</sup>

Mrs. Molesworth's attitude to the children she writes about also reflects the new feeling abroad in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Throughout the book Floss and Carrots are treated with understanding and affection. Their little world, their ideas, their feelings, frequently occupy whole chapters without the introduction of an adult. They are important, and they are individuals



to be treated as such. The author makes this last point quite clear as she describes the reaction of Captain Desart, Carrot's father, to the information that Carrots has been guilty of taking a half-sovereign which did not belong to him. As far as Captain Desart is concerned,

A fault was a fault; telling a falsehood was telling a falsehood; and he made no allowance for the excuses or "palliating circumstances" there might be to consider. One child, according to his ideas, was to be treated exactly like another; why the same offence should deserve severer punishment with a self-willed, self-confident, bold, matter-of-fact lad, such as Maurice, than with a timid, fanciful, baby-like creature as was his little Fabian, he could not have understood had he tried.<sup>31</sup>

Carrots' mother does understand, however, and gently straightens out the whole misunderstanding with the little boy.

He told his mother about his thinking perhaps the fairies had brought the "sixpenny", and she explained to him that now-a-days, alas! that was hardly likely to be the case, though she seemed quite to understand his fancying it, and did not laugh at him at all. But she spoke very gravely to him, too, about never taking anything that was not his; and, after listening and thinking with all his might, Carrots said he thought he "kite under'tood."<sup>32</sup>

Like Mrs. Ewing, Mrs. Molesworth is content to bring religion and religious behaviour into her story only if it appears naturally. Since there is no particular reason for doing so in "Carrots", religion does not appear except for one small passage in which she says that although it is a very solemn thing to have the charge of children, "we . . . take heart when we remember that the Great Gardener who never makes mistakes has promised to help





us; even out of our mistakes to bring good."<sup>33</sup>

Before leaving the realistic story, mention should be made of two books which, because they are American, do not come within the scope of this thesis, but which were extremely popular and influential in England as well as in the land from which they sprang. They surpass anything of the kind written in England during this period. These were Louisa May Alcott's Little Women (1867) and Mark Twain's Adventure's of Tom Sawyer (1871). There is much to be learned from Little Women, but the lessons are provided through the characters, not directly through the author. As for the characters, they are all such lovably human people with their mixture of faults and virtues that the reader never feels that lessons are being consciously dispensed by them. Jo, one of the most appealing of the four "little women", probably reflects the feeling of the reader when she says, "'Tell another story, mother, -- one with a moral to it, like this. I like to think about them afterwards, if they are real, and not too preachy.'"<sup>34</sup> "Real and not too preachy" aptly describes most of the nineteenth-century stories for girls, and Little Women would seem to be the perfection toward which English realistic stories were striving. In somewhat the same way, Tom Sawyer embodies the adventure without didacticism and the boyish humour, which were becoming more and more apparent during the later nineteenth century. Where it far excels other stories of the period, however, is in its happy faculty of presenting life from a typical boy's point of view. It has an understand-





ing of the nature of boys which has never been surpassed.

#### ADVENTURE STORY

The second main class of children's books to show the effects of the changing concept of juvenile literature after 1850 was the adventure story, a type of fiction frowned upon by didactic writers of the preceding half century.<sup>35</sup> Only two years after Catherine Sinclair's Holiday House, which pointed the way for later stories of family life, came Captain Marryat's Masterman Ready, which fulfilled much the same function for the adventure story -- although its ties to the didactic period were more apparent than those of Holiday House.

Published in 1841, Masterman Ready was written in answer to the request of the author's children to add to Wyss's Swiss Family Robinson, a book of which Marryat, as an experienced seaman, could not approve. He therefore, wrote an entirely new story about a family of six who were cast upon a desert island with a negro nursemaid and an old sailor. It presents a good deal of instruction on such practical matters as the provision of food,<sup>36</sup> on more academic topics such as the nature of a colony,<sup>37</sup> as well as on religion<sup>38</sup> and behaviour.<sup>39</sup> In this respect, the book has much in common with previous works by such authors as Aikin and Sherwood. However, there is a difference in the manner in which the instruction is conveyed. In almost all cases it is worked in smoothly with the story and appears only in the conversation of



the characters. Furthermore such instruction is quite consistent with the characterization of the various people who appear in the story. Ready, the old sailor, is a simple, good man, with a pious turn of mind and a vast amount of experience on which to draw. Mr. Seagrave, the head of the family, is likewise very religious, and is besides a well-educated man. It is perfectly natural that these two should impart advice and information in accordance with their natures and backgrounds. Finally, it should be noted that although there is a good deal of instruction in Masterman Ready it is nevertheless incidental. The emphasis lies on the story itself which is full of action, excitement, and humour. In other words, entertainment overshadows improvement.

In the characterization and the treatment of the Seagrave children Marryat reflects most clearly the changes which were manifesting themselves in the nineteenth century. The difference first appears as he introduces the members of the family at the beginning of the book. Among them are, "William, who was the eldest, a clever, steady boy, but at the same time, full of mirth and humour; Thomas, who was six years old, a very thoughtless but good-tempered boy, full of mischief, and always in a scrape."<sup>40</sup> There is a certain tolerance toward childish misdemeanours indicated here, as well as an appreciation of humour. The tolerance is quickly confirmed, for very shortly there is an account of the "men" of the family going ashore, among them Tommy. "Tommy had promised his mamma to be very good; but that he always did, and almost always forgot his



promise directly he was out of sight."<sup>41</sup> The statement is not the prelude to an admonitory remark addressed to the reader, as it probably would have been twenty-five years earlier; it is used merely to set the scene for Tommy's mischief. In fact, Tommy's pranks and naughtiness provide the comedy for most of the story. Furthermore, no matter what he does, he gets off with a scolding, or at most with being deprived of dinner. When his mother asks him to fetch the baby who has crawled too near the goat, he does so but pauses to kick at the goat's head. His mother rebukes him:

"Don't do that, Tommy; he'll butt at you, and hurt you."

"I don't care," replied Tommy, holding the baby by one hand while he continued to kick at Billy. Billy, however, would not stand it any longer: he lowered his head, made a bound at Tommy, struck him in the chest, and Tommy and little Albert rolled on the ground one over the other. The baby roared, and Master Tommy began to whimper. Mrs. Seagrave ran up to them and caught up the baby; and Master Tommy, a little alarmed, caught hold of his mother's dress for protection, looking behind him at Billy, who appeared very much inclined to renew the attack.

"Why don't you mind what is said to you, Tommy? I told you that he would butt you," said Mrs. Seagrave, pacifying the child.

"I don't care for him," replied Tommy, who perceived that the goat was walking away.

.....

"Billy never butts at me, mamma," said Caroline.

"No, my dear, because you do not tease him; but your brother Tommy is very fond of teasing animals, and so he gets punished and frightened. It is very wrong of him to do so, especially as he is told by his father and me that he ought not. Good children always obey their parents, but Tommy is not a good boy."<sup>42</sup>

With that gentle admonishment of Tommy's cruelty to an animal,





and of his outright disobedience, the episode is finished.

The children appear as fairly realistic youngsters, but in characterizing the adults, Marryat would appear to be too close to the didactic tradition to permit them more than the slightest imperfections. Mr. Seagrave is the model head of a family whose only fault is a tendency to despair when first wrecked upon the desert island with his family. In the old seaman, Ready, there is no flaw<sup>43</sup> for he is unfailingly kind and wise. He is the rock on whom the whole family lean in time of trouble, not only for practical knowledge, but also for moral support. God is never far from his thoughts and he takes every occasion to voice his devotion to his Maker.

This fact is to a large extent responsible for the insistently Christian tone which marks Masterman Ready as more closely allied to the previous didactic literature in this respect than to the later books. Ready, however, is not the only person with a religious turn of mind. Captain Osborn, who is the captain of the ship, is first introduced to the reader as "a good seaman, who did what he considered best for the safety of his vessel, and then put his trust in that Providence who is ever watchful over us."<sup>44</sup> Later, when the Seagrave family and Ready have been stranded upon the desert island, another passage typical of the religious tone of the book occurs. Mr. Seagrave, having pointed out that they have done enough work for one day, Ready replies:

"Yes, sir, . . . and I think we ought to



thank God for His mercies to us before we go to sleep. Have we not much to thank Him for? Had the weather been bad, and the water rough, should we have been so comfortably on shore as we are now? Has it not been a mercy?"

"You remind me of my duty, Roady; let us thank Him for His goodness, and pray to Him for His protection before we go to sleep."

"Do, my dear husband," said Mrs. Seagrave, from her tent; "I can hear you and join with you."

Mr. Seagrave then offered up a prayer of thankfulness; and they all retired to rest.<sup>45</sup>

Masterman Ready presents an interesting mixture of the old and the new. It might with some justice be classed as transitional.

Ten years later, in 1851, a new writer of adventure stories for boys appeared, a writer who had little in his books to suggest any ties whatever with "the Barbauld crew", as Lamb called them.<sup>46</sup> This was Captain Mayne Reid who specialized in highly coloured and romantic adventure. The first of his books for boys was Scalp Hunters, the account of the adventures of Henry Haller, a young man who goes to St. Louis in search of the picturesque, joins a group of prairie merchants, and eventually becomes involved with Seguin, the leader of the scalp-hunters (white men who are paid so much per Apache or Navajo scalp which they obtain.) Haller falls in love with the daughter of Seguin, and agrees to help Seguin rescue his other daughter from a fierce tribe of Navajo who have made her their "Mystery Queen". Throughout the book Haller moves from one breath-taking adventure to another, whether it be escaping from a tremendous herd of stampeding buffalo by riding on the back of one of them,<sup>47</sup> or narrowly missing death in quick-



sand through the efforts of his noble horse who pulls him to safety,<sup>48</sup> or being saved from falling over a thousand foot cliff when a delirium induced by thirst leads him to ignore everything but the river at the foot of it.<sup>49</sup> Obviously Reid's purpose is entertainment, rather than moral instruction. Lest there should be any doubt about the latter point, it is necessary only to quote a brief but characteristic passage which occurs the morning after Haller arrives at Santa Fe. The young man has celebrated his arrival by "feasting and making merry" and has achieved a splitting headache through his efforts.

Next morning I was awakened by the voice of my man Godé, who appeared to be in high spirits, singing a snatch of a Canadian boat-song.

"Ah, monsieur!" cried he, seeing me awake, "to-night -- aujourd'hui -- une grande fonction -- one bal -- vat le dam Mexicain he call fandango. Très bien, monsieur. You vill sure have grand plaisir to see un fandango mexicain?"

"Not I, Godé. My countrymen are not so fond of dancing as yours."

"C'est vrai, monsieur; but von fandango is très curieux You sall see ver many sort of de pas. Bolero, et valse, wis de Coona, and ver many more pas, all mix up in von puchero. Allons! monsieur, you vill see ver many pretty girl, avec les yeux très noirs, and ver short -- ah, pe Gar! ver short -- vat you call em in Americaine?--"

"I do not know what you allude to."

"Cela! Zis, monsieur," holding out the skirt of his hunting-shirt; "par Dieu! now I have him -- petticoes; ver short petticoes. Ah, pe Gar! you sall see vat you sall see en un fandango mexicain."<sup>50</sup>

Such an incident would never have appeared in the books of any of the didactic authors. To them it would be unthinkable for any respectable character to over-indulge in drinking. Nor would Godé's





swearing have been permitted. Finally, the French-Canadian's idea that the short skirts of the dancers would present an irresistible attraction for Haller would doubtless have been considered by them as a shocking impropriety.

Reid's book is quite significant because of its frank lack of concern with moral uplift, and its emphasis on the entertainment of the reader, but it indicates very little as far as a change in the attitude to children is concerned, for children have no place in the story. The adults are handled with the same verve as the plot is, emerging as romantic and colourful "characters" like the French Canadian Godé in the foregoing quotation. Their realism might be questioned, but it goes without saying that they cannot be considered "perfect adults". The last point, religion, as might be expected from the general tone of the book, plays an insignificant part. The reader realizes that both the author and his hero believe in God, but their belief is far from essential to the story.

R.M. Ballantyne, whose first book for children, The Young Fur Traders, appeared in 1856, five years after Scalp Hunters, does not stray so far from what the didactic writers would have considered proper. In his book which is based on his own experiences in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company, he tells the story of young Kate and Charley Kennedy, dealing particularly with the experiences of the latter when he is allowed to go to the far north in the service of the Company. There is a certain amount of





moralizing and instruction but far less than appears in the truly didactic books. What sets its didacticism apart even more from what had gone before is the rather humorous way in which much of it is presented. An example occurs after Mr. Kennedy informs his young son Charley that he is to be given a job in the counting-room of the Hudson Bay post -- as a means of taming the lad. The idea of sitting on a stool inside four walls day in and day out sends young Charley to the depths of despair and he states emphatically to his sister that he "'would rather become a buffalo than do it.'"<sup>51</sup> The author now proceeds to admonish the reader about the habit of exaggeration.

Now, this was very wrong of Charley, for, of course, he didn't mean it. Indeed, it is too much a habit among little boys, aye, and among grown-up people too, to say what they don't mean; as, no doubt, you are aware, dear reader, if you possess half the self-knowledge we give you credit for; and we cannot too strongly remonstrate with ourself and others against the practice -- leading, as it does, to all sorts of absurd exaggerations, such as gravely asserting that we are broiling hot, when we are simply rather warm, or, more than half dead with fatigue, when we are merely very tired. However, Charley said that he would rather be "a buffalo than do it," and so we feel bound in honour to record the fact.<sup>52</sup>

Ballantyne may lecture his young hero, but at the same time there is an evident sympathy in his attitude toward Charley and his aspirations, a sympathy which bespeaks the new attitude to children rather than the old. Furthermore, Charley is first described as a "reckless, joyous, good-humoured, hare-brained,"<sup>53</sup> young fellow,



and is proven so over and over again in the early part of the book. He longs for a life in the Canadian wilds, hunting, canoeing, fighting Redskins, roughing it in general, and the author obviously approves of his desire for adventure. He approves, too, of the spirit behind the somewhat wild behaviour of Charley, merely making sure the reader understands that the boy's heart is good and kind. His methods are well-illustrated in the episode of the wolf hunt. After first showing the strong bond of affection between Charley and his father, an affection which is continually being subjected to violent upheavals occasioned by Charley's thoughtlessness and his father's irascible temper, Ballantyne describes the lad's reprehensible behaviour in taking a new horse which he has been forbidden to ride and joining in the wolf hunt. The horse, as one might expect, runs away with him and, terrified by the explosion of Charley's gun,

. . . flew past Mr Kennedy like a whirlwind.

"Stop, you young scoundrel!" he shouted, shaking his fist at Charley as he passed.

Charley was past stopping, either by inclination or ability. This sudden and unexpected accumulation of disasters was too much for him. As he passed his sire, with his brown curls streaming straight out behind, and his eyes flashing with excitement, his teeth clenched, and his horse tearing along more like an incarnate fiend than an animal -- a spirit of combined recklessness, consternation, indignation, and glee, took possession of him. He waved his whip wildly over his head, brought it down with a stinging cut on the horse's neck, and uttered a shout of defiance that threw completely into the shade the loudest war-whoop that was ever uttered by the brazen lungs of the wildest savage between Hudson's Bay and Oregon.<sup>54</sup>



This escapade, which ends in a snow drift with Charley senseless through having gone headfirst through the end of an old keg buried under the snow, results in the worried Mr. Kennedy giving in to Charley's wish to accompany the voyageurs into the north. His banged head is evidently considered sufficient punishment for his folly, for there is not even a lecture delivered.

As the book progresses, Charley matures under the effect of many exciting and often dangerous experiences. He becomes quieter, and steadier -- the sort of man admired by all. The same pattern is followed by Charley's impulsively heedless friend, Harry, who eventually wins the hand of Charley's sister, Kate. Evidently the wildness of youth is not to be taken seriously. In fact, it would seem to augur well for eventual merit as a man.

The Young Fur Traders is equally interesting for the way in which Ballantyne presents Mr. Frank Kennedy. Mr. Kennedy, a retired furtrader with the Hudson's Bay Fur Company, is the father of the hero of the tale, Charley. Furthermore, he is a decidedly likable person. However, he is developed by the author as a decidedly human sort of man with more than his share of the little eccentricities which fall to the lot of most people. The account of his reaction to an appointment to a very northerly and desolate post after years of service gives a good idea of his peculiar temper.

On receiving this communication, Mr. Kennedy upset his chair, stamped his foot, ground his teeth, and vowed, in the hearing of his wife and children, that, sooner than obey the mandate, he would see the governors and council





of Rupert's Land hanged, quartered, and boiled into tallow! Ebullitions of this kind were peculiar to Frank Kennedy, and meant nothing. They were simply the safety-valves to his superabundant ire --and, like safety-valves in general, made much noise but did no damage. It was well, however, on such occasions to keep out of the old fur-trader's way, for he had an irresistible propensity to hit out at whatever stood before him -- especially if the object stood on a level with his own eyes and wore whiskers.<sup>55</sup>

Charley is frequently on the receiving end of these bursts of wrath for he usually manages to provoke his father at least two or three times a day. However, minutes after Mr. Kennedy loses his temper with his son and throws his pipe at him, Charley is speaking of him affectionately to his friend as "dear old father".<sup>56</sup> Mr. Kennedy, as created by Ballantyne, calls forth from the reader his affection, sympathy, and amusement. He is a far cry from the adult character favoured by the didactic writers.

In The Young Fur Traders, religion is far less prominent than it was in the first of the adventure stories, Masterman Ready, but appears more often than it did in Reid's Scalp Hunters -- in which it was virtually ignored. However, it is never dragged in by Ballantyne, but appears quite naturally. Kate reminds Charley of his blessings which he owes to God;<sup>57</sup> the clergyman of the settlement advises him, just before he leaves for the north, to put his trust in God;<sup>58</sup> and the final note which the author sounds is likewise religious, as Jacques, the trusted guide of Charley and Harry, bids the two young men good-bye.<sup>59</sup> The very naturalness of the introduction of such brief passages, as well as the infrequency of their appear-



ance, however, serves to prevent any emphasis on religion.<sup>60</sup>

The next of the popular writers of boys' adventure books was W.H.G. Kingston. Best known was his series dealing with the Navy, <sup>of which</sup> the first, The Three Midshipmen, appeared in 1862. The series follows the fortunes of three boys as they rise from rank to rank in the Navy. Once again the emphasis is on action with little attempt to moralize. Excitement and suspense hold the young reader enthralled as Kingston narrates how Jack, one of the three midshipmen of the title, when attempting to assist in shortening the sail before a coming squall, is thrown from his hold into the sea. His friend, Murray, immediately leaps into the sea to help him.

Murray meantime caught sight of Jack, who lay senseless on the water, to the surface of which he had just risen, after having once gone down from the force with which he had fallen into the sea. Murray dreaded lest he should again see him sink. He exerted all his strength to get up to him. . . . Murray swam bravely on. The foam, as the wind swept it off the surface of the sea, dashed wildly in his face, but he kept his eye fixed steadily on Jack's head, that should he go down again, he might know exactly where to dive after him. . . . His courage was . . . high, and what he wanted in muscular strength he made up by his undaunted spirit. He longed to know what had become of the frigate, but he would not turn his head to look. His first object was to get hold of Jack, and to keep his face out of the water, that, when animation returned, he might not be suffocated. With steady strokes he swam on, admirably retaining his presence of mind. Every stroke was measured. There was no hurry, no bustle, with Murray; he knew that such would only bring worse speed.<sup>61</sup>

This is only one brief example of the sort of action in which the



book abounds. The speed with which the story moves becomes readily apparent from a quick glance through the first six chapters. Among other adventures the boys contrive to capture a Greek hoat -- an ill-advised bit of personal initiative. Next their ship is wrecked. The boys are appointed to another ship which is sent to attack a pirate fortress. Paddy joins the crew of a brig which goes down in a gale, but the irrepressible young Irishman turns up again among the survivors of an Egyptian ship which blows up when being chased by a British frigate. Finally two more attacks on enemy towns are made. The other twenty-seven chapters maintain the pace -- a clear indication that entertainment is the purpose of Kingston's book.

The Three Midshipmen does not indicate a great deal with respect to the changing attitude to children or to adults -- for reasons which are not hard to find. As far as the attitude to children is concerned, shortly after the story gets well under way, the three main characters are called upon to take their place as young men in a man's world so that the child-adult relationship is a brief one. As for the adults who are mostly officers, the respect for authority which is so important in naval life usually prevents any attempt to show up their imperfections. Two fairly brief episodes early in the book, however, are enlightening. One occurs when the three boys undertake to revenge themselves on Lieutenant Spry, a rather pompous individual who kicks Paddy down the hatchway when the boy inadvertently ruins the officer's white trousers. They teach the ship's pet monkey to imitate Mr. Spry's





unfortunate mannerisms and allow him to go through his paces before all the marines lined up for drill<sup>62</sup>-- much to the fury of the lieutenant. The other rather humorous episode, again involving the incorrigible Paddy, occurs when the lad, on the way to join his ship as a midshipman, mistakes a retired admiral for an old seaman and asks him to carry his portmanteau for a shilling. The admiral, who is happily possessed of a sense of humour, touches his hat and does so -- to the confusion of Paddy when he discovers his mistake.<sup>63</sup> The admissions that a representative of authority can be detestable, and that someone as exalted as an admiral can be mistaken for an ordinary old seaman, belong to the new era of children's literature.

Kingston's book makes fewer references to religion than does Ballantyne's The Young Fur Traders. The author makes his own orthodoxy clear at the beginning of the book when he has the Admiral speak seriously to Jack about reading his Bible. From that point, however, religion appears only momentarily, usually when the boys are in a tight spot.

The second last of the adventure stories to be considered is A Roving Commission by G. A. Henty -- the best, and one of the most prolific of the five authors dealt with so far in this section. Like most of his books, A Roving Commission is written around actual military history.<sup>64</sup> This one concerns the rising of the slaves in Haiti in 1791, describing events from the point of view of Nat Glover, who at the beginning of the book is a fifteen-year-old





midshipman in the Navy. Although basing his story upon actual historical happenings, Henty does not allow that fact to limit the excitement and suspense which were becoming standard in adventure stories. In the very first chapter an episode occurs which gets the story off to a rousing start. Nat, on a brief shore leave in Haiti, has seized the occasion to hire a horse and do a little exploring.

He was going by one of these [plantations] , half a mile from the town, when he heard a loud scream, raised evidently by a woman in extreme pain or terror. He was just opposite the entrance, and, springing from his horse, he ran in.

On the ground, twenty yards from the gate, lay a girl. A huge hound had hold of her shoulder, and was shaking her violently. Nat drew his dirk and gave a loud shout as he rushed forward. The hound loosed his hold of the girl and turned to meet him, and, springing upon him with a savage growl, threw him to the ground. Nat drove his dirk into the animal as he fell, and threw his left arm across his throat to prevent the dog seizing him there. A moment later the hound had seized it with a grip that extracted a shout of pain from the midshipman. As he again buried his dirk in the hound's side, the dog shifted his hold from Nat's forearm to his shoulder and shook him as if he had been a child.

Nat made no effort to free himself, for he knew that were he to uncover his throat for a moment the dog would seize him there. Though the pain was terrible he continued to deal stroke after stroke to the dog. One of these blows must have reached the heart, for suddenly its hold relaxed and it rolled over, just as half a dozen negroes<sup>65</sup> armed with sticks came rushing out of the house.

The only attempt at improvement of the reader is such as appears in the foregoing quotation -- that which arises out of the character of the hero, who is everything that any young man would aspire to be.



There is even less opportunity in A Roving Commission than there was in The Three Midshipmen for the attitude to children and to childish behaviour to make itself apparent. The nearest the author comes to reflecting the more tolerant attitude which was becoming more and more firmly established is at the beginning of the book when two of the ship's officers are discussing Nat. The first lieutenant says of him: "and when has worked off those animal spirits of his he will make a capital officer, but at present he is one of the most mischievous young monkeys I ever came across."<sup>66</sup> Such a remark would seem to be a pretty clear indication that the pranks of youth are to be viewed as the result of animal spirits, not of innate sinfulness, and that they promise well for the adult-to-be.

On the other two counts, that of the attitude to the adult, and the attitude to religion, there is little to be said with respect to A Roving Commission. Adults are handled seriously, but lack much in the way of individual characterization. They are important mainly for their part in forwarding the action. As for religion, the author takes the Christianity of most of the characters for granted and leaves it at that.

The best of all adventure stories belongs to the year 1882. It is, of course, Stevenson's Treasure Island, a book whose excellence gives it the right to be considered in a class by itself. It was started purely for the pleasure it would bring to Stevenson's young stepson, Lloyd -- and to the author himself. According to the



latter, "It's all about a map, and a treasure, and a mutiny, and a derelict ship, and a current, and a fine old Squire Trelawney, and a doctor, and another doctor, and a sea cook with one leg, and a sea-song with the chorus 'Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!'" The idea of didacticism never seems to enter the author's mind. He goes on to enthuse, "'It's awful fun, boys' stories. You just indulge the pleasure of your heart, that's all; no trouble, no strain; no writing, just drive along as the words come!'"<sup>67</sup>

In Treasure Island there can be no condescension on the part of the adults toward the boy in their midst, for although he never steps out of character as a young boy, Jim is a person of importance, and deservedly so. He takes a major part in the action and is to a large extent responsible for bringing the whole venture to a successful conclusion. It is he who is made Billy Bones' confidant, he who takes from the dead seaman's chest the oilskin packet containing the map of Treasure Island, he who overhears the conspirators as he hides in the apple barrel and is thus able to give warning to the captain, the squire, and the doctor. Jim it is who makes the acquaintance of Ben Gunn and smoothes the way for friendly relations between the latter and Jim's party; and it is Jim who manages to spirit away the good ship Hispaniola to the great discomfiture of the pirates.

The perfect adult has no place in Stevenson's array of adult characters. Squire Trelawney is a particularly good example of this fact, for he is presented with a realism which takes into





account the various little weaknesses to which all human beings are prone to a greater or lesser extent. The Squire is obviously an important man in his particular circle, and he plays an important and not uncreditable part in the hunt for the treasure. Nevertheless, he has a deplorable tendency to talk too much, a failing which is responsible to a large extent for the troubles of the original group. Furthermore, that he is a poor judge of men appears in his estimate of the crew of the Hispaniola, and of Captain Smollett whose conduct he calls "unmanly, unsailorly, and downright un-English."<sup>68</sup>

Of religious instruction there is none. In fact, in one place where religion is brought in, the Bible becomes an object of the superstitious dread of one of the pirates who has mutilated his copy to provide the "black spot". He knows that only bad luck will be his lot now.

#### FAIRY TALE AND FANTASY

The freedom of the imagination so encouraged by the Romantics was slow to bear fruit in original fanciful tales written for children by English writers. Actually it was not until 1851 that a fairy story of any importance was published by an English author. Perhaps the reason lies in the supply available from past years and also available through the translation of such tales from other countries. Even before 1830 the Grimm brothers had published their German folk tales which were rapidly translated



into English.<sup>69</sup> Then came the Home Treasury Series (1841-49) put out by Felix Summerly (Sir William Cole) which contained a number of the old favorites such as "The Sleeping Beauty", "Jack and the Beanstalk", "Red Riding Hood", and "Beauty and the Beast".<sup>70</sup> In 1846 came Mary Howitt's translation of Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales which English children took to their hearts at once.<sup>71</sup>

Finally, in 1851 appeared The King of the Golden River by the English writer, John Ruskin. It was followed by a number of notable fairy tales and fantasies -- Thackeray's The Rose and the Ring (1855), Kingsley's Water-Babies (1863), Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865), Macdonald's At the Back of the North Wind (1871), and Mrs. Molesworth's Cuckoo Clock (1877).

These are only a few of the fanciful stories which belong to the latter part of the nineteenth century, but they serve to illustrate the effect of the various movements which were taking place in society in general. Furthermore, they have in common the fact that they were all more interested in amusing children than in instructing them.

The King of the Golden River follows the folk tale pattern, and like most folk tales evidences little concern with attitudes to children or adults, or with religion as such. Like all the fairy tales and fantasies, however, it does illustrate the new place which imagination had come to occupy in the minds of adults, their willingness to allow their children to indulge their love of the fanciful. Also it arrays itself quite clearly on the side of amusement, for in the "Advertisement" it is stated that the story was



written in 1841 "at the request of a very young lady, and solely for her amusement,"<sup>72</sup>

Thackeray's Rose and the Ring (1855) is also intended for the pleasure of children. The author, in explaining how the story came to be published, tells how it was composed as a fire-side pantomime to amuse a group of children. He says its popularity prompted him to think "If these children are pleased, . . . why should not others be amused also?"<sup>73</sup>

One of the most interesting aspects of this fairy story from the point of view of the changing attitudes of the nineteenth century is Thackeray's distinct departure from the perfect adult of didactic literature. Although The Rose and the Ring is ostensibly a fairy tale dealing with the conventional kings and queens, princes and princesses, the author with his clever satire contrives to reveal these exalted characters as rather ridiculous human beings with most of the failings and frailties of very ordinary mortals. The King and Queen of Paflagonia indulge in a family squabble at the breakfast table, the King accusing the Queen of always drinking tea, the Queen countering with the statement that it is better than drinking port or brandy-and-water.<sup>74</sup> The King proves himself on the way to becoming an alcoholic when he rushes for several egg-cupfuls of cognac as soon as he is alone. He also proves himself a master of self-deception in the matter of his motives in taking the crown from his nephew.<sup>75</sup> Next the Princess Angelica is exposed as a humbug, the Countess Gruffanuff as a social climber and snob, and



Prince Bulbo as a pompous ass. Even the hero, Giglio, manages to involve himself in a most unpleasant situation by imbibing too deeply and signing a promise to marry the old and ugly Countess Gruffanuff. The only character to escape completely Thackeray's satirical pen is the Fairy Blackstick. Obviously he has no fears that to present children with adult characters who are less than perfect is to encourage the wrong attitude in children toward their parents.

Of all the fantasies Charles Kingsley's Water-Babies (1863) is the most didactic, but even it is intended more to amuse than instruct. Kingsley himself says it is "a fairy tale, and only fun and pretence,"<sup>76</sup> although the effectiveness of this statement as proof of a non-didactic purpose is somewhat lessened by the fact that it appears in the "Moral" at the end of the book. Probably the reason that The Water-Babies gives an impression of being written mainly to entertain -- in spite of frequent remarks of an improving nature -- is because the author seldom departs from a half-humorous, tongue-in-cheek tone. For example, when little Tom, a new water-baby, finally sees another little water-baby with whom he can play, Kingsley says:

. . . you will, no doubt, want to know how it happened, and why Tom could never find a water-baby till after he had got the lobster out of the pot. And, if you will read this story nine times over, and then think for yourself, you will find out why. It is not good for little boys to be told everything, and never to be forced to use their own wits. They would learn, then, no more than they do at Dr. Dulcimer's famous suburban establishment





for the idler members of the youthful aristocracy, where the masters learn the lessons and the boys hear them -- which saves a great deal of trouble -- for the time being.<sup>77</sup>

Furthermore, he surrounds young Tom with such entertaining fairy characters as Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby, and Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid, two beings who provide many wholesome lessons, but still contrive to keep Tom and the reader in a state of pleasurable suspense as to what they will do next.

Actually, The Water-Babies is an interesting combination of the old and the new. Its didacticism marks it as belonging to the old. So also does the author's inveterate habit of talking-down to his readers which is established at the very beginning of the book when he introduces Tom, and goes on to say, "That is a short name, and you have heard it before, so you will not have much trouble in remembering it."<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, the author's conception of youngsters is clearly different from that of the didactic writers who flourished around the beginning of the century. Previous to becoming a water-baby, Tom was a chimney-sweep. As such, he is pictured as a thoroughly naughty youngster -- familiar with bad language, fond of beer when he can get it, addicted to tossing halfpennies and heaving stones at the legs of passing horses by way of recreation. In spite of his unedifying character, Tom is treated in an almost indulgent fashion by the author who evidently considers him the victim of his environment. Later when Tom becomes a water-baby, the fairy Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid also observes his continued mischief with a tender sadness which



recognizes his faults, but does not condemn Tom for them, even though she punishes him.

Kingsley's attitude toward play reflects the new ideas which were being expressed particularly in educational theory. He does not look upon it as a necessary evil to be kept within strict bounds, but encourages it. Tom, as a water-baby, spends most of his time just amusing himself. It is significant that when Tom journeys to the Other-end-of-Nowhere, the place where the worst offenders on earth are confined, he finds on the Isle of Laputa a great pillar on which is inscribed "'Playthings not allowed here'".<sup>79</sup> Kingsley obviously disapproves of the tendency to stuff the brains of children continuously with information. Explaining how the children of the island came to be so unhappy and to resemble vegetables, he says:

"... their foolish fathers and mothers, instead of letting them pick flowers, and make dirt-pies, and get birds' nests, and dance round the gooseberry bush, as little children should, kept them always at lessons, working, working, working, learning week-day lessons all week-days, and Sunday lessons all Sunday, and weekly examinations every Saturday, and monthly examinations every month, and yearly examinations every year, everything seven times over, as if once was not enough, and enough as good as a feast -- till their brains grew big, and their bodies grew small, and they were all changed into turnips, with little but water inside; and still their foolish parents actually pick the leaves off them as fast as they grow, lest they should have anything green about them."

"Ah!" said Tom, "if dear Mrs. Doasyouwould-bedoneby knew of it she would send them a lot of tops, and balls, and marbles, and ninepins, and make them all as jolly as sand-boys."<sup>80</sup>



Also expressive of the new ideas in education is his condemnation of certain types of discipline in school. Mrs. Bedone **byasyoudid** spends a good deal of time in trying to teach schoolmasters the error of their ways, for "she boxed their ears, and thumped them over the head with rulers, and pandied their hands with canes, and told them that they told stories, and were this and that bad sort of people."<sup>81</sup>

In his presentation of adults, Kingsley opposes the previously-held idea that adults in general must be treated as near-perfect beings by authors. For example, in one of his numerous digressions he has this to say:

There was a wise old heathen once, who said,  
. . . The greatest reverence is due to children  
. . . But some people, and I am afraid the professor was one of them, interpret that in a more strange, curious, one-sided, left-handed, topsy-turvy, inside-out, behind-before fashion than even Cousin Cramchild; for they make it mean, that you must show your respect for children, by never confessing yourself in the wrong to them, even if you know that you are so, lest they should lose confidence in their elders.<sup>82</sup>

He is prepared to go much further, however, than a mere statement that adults can err. He enjoys himself hugely in generalizing on certain types of human beings and laughing at their foibles. Here is his picture of the learning of the doctors.

So all the doctors in the county were called in to make a report on his case; and of course every one of them flatly contradicted the other: else what use is there in being men of science? But at last the majority agreed on a report in the true medical language, one half bad Latin, the other half worse Greek, and the rest what might have been English, if they had only learnt to write it.<sup>83</sup>





Nor does he limit himself to doctors but goes on to include in his ridicule Irishmen, fashion-conscious mothers, careless nursery-maids, schoolmasters, and so on -- such wholesale fun at the expense of adults is in direct contrast to the treatment accorded to them by the authors of children's books during the highly didactic period from 1780 to 1830.

Finally, although religion makes its way into the pages of The Water-Babies, it does so to a very limited extent, and what Kingsley has to say on the subject is not of a particularly instructive nature. For example, when pointing out the unhappy condition of little Tom, he states that the boy had never been taught to say his prayers, and his only acquaintance with the words "God" and "Christ" was through the profanity of those around him.<sup>84</sup>

In another place Kingsley enlarges somewhat on his belief that a man may learn to be a more thorough gentleman from the Bible than from all the drawing-rooms in London.<sup>85</sup> This type of religion, however, is far from what is presented in Mrs. Sherwood's Fairchild Family, and, if anything, serves rather to accentuate the difference between the two books -- and the two periods -- from the point of view of children's literature.

One of the freshest and gayest of the fantasies to appear in the nineteenth century was Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865) which was followed in 1871 by the equally delightful Through the Looking-Glass. It was as completely fanciful as the wildest dream, and utterly nonsensical with its odd topsy-turvy logic.



From the children's point of view the book is merely good fun, as Lewis Carroll intended it should be. His poetic account of how Alice's Adventures in Wonderland came to be composed makes his purpose quite clear. It was to satisfy the imperious demands of three small girls with whom he was boating on the river one afternoon. This is how he describes the occasion:

Ah, cruel Three! In such an hour,  
Beneath such dreamy weather,  
To beg a tale of breath too weak  
To stir the tiniest feather!  
Yet what can one poor voice avail  
Against three tongues together?

. . . . .

And ever, as the story drained  
The wells of fancy dry,  
And faintly strove that weary one  
To put the subject by,  
"The rest next time --" "It is next time!"  
The happy voices cry.<sup>86</sup>

In line with the originality of his nonsensical fantasy, is the attitude of Carroll to Alice. Her role is a departure from that found in any previous book written for children, for she is treated as a superior being. In fact, she is the only sane person in the midst of a host of more or less insane characters, although she never takes advantage of this state of affairs.

The same refusal to be bound by convention reveals itself in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass as Carroll produces some of the most amusing caricatures of adults to be found in children's literature— for example, the Duchess and the Queen of Hearts, the Red Queen and the White Knight. His sense of humour carries him even further, however. He introduces



into his books a number of clever parodies on well-known poems of certain writers. There is a certain healthy irreverence in his parody of Isaac Watts' revered poem, "How doth the little busy bee".<sup>87</sup>

"How doth the little crocodile  
Improve his shining tail,  
And pour the waters of the Nile  
On every golden scale!

"How cheerfully he seems to grin,  
How neatly spreads his claws,  
And welcomes little fishes in,  
With gently smiling jaws!"<sup>88</sup>

And, although younger children who were amused by the crocodile stanzas might miss the humour of Carroll's treatment of "The Old Man's Comforts" by Southey, surely a slightly older boy would find it well worth a chuckle. It is this refusal of Lewis Carroll to bow down to the gods of convention and tradition with respect to children which sets him apart so decidedly from previous writers.

The year 1871 brought a fantasy with a somewhat mystical turn -- George Macdonald's At the Back of the North Wind. It is the story of a little boy called Diamond whose father is a coachman. Diamond makes the acquaintance of the north wind and with her goes on some wonderful expeditions, not the least of which is his journey to the back of the north wind. Between these fanciful episodes, Diamond's everyday life goes on as he takes his part in helping his family through some very trying times. As far as teaching young readers valuable lessons, Diamond can be relied upon to do so through his own example -- for lovable as he is, he is



almost too perfect to be believable. Direct moralizing, however, is difficult to find. The only passage which would seem to qualify as such occurs when Diamond has been helping his mother, and in doing so has kept his own spirits up. The author comments:

. . . to try to make others comfortable is the only way to get right comfortable ourselves, and that comes partly of not being able to think so much about ourselves when we are helping other people. For our Selves will always do pretty well if we don't pay them too much attention.<sup>89</sup>

In his treatment of little Diamond, Macdonald displays a genuine respect for children. Far from agreeing with Mary Wollstonecraft's statement that it is only to animals that children can do good,<sup>90</sup> he gives Diamond an important role in helping the people with whom he comes in contact, adults as well as children. His parents are often cheered by his efforts and made aware of their many blessings,<sup>91</sup> and even a drunken cabman is influenced toward eventual reform by the little boy.<sup>92,93</sup> On occasion, his parents are even made dependent upon him, rather than his being entirely dependent upon them. It is the money earned by Diamond as a cabman which tides the family over when his father is too ill to work.<sup>94</sup> To put the final touch to the portrait of an exceptional youngster, Macdonald frequently shows him to be the possessor of a sort of child-like wisdom which puts to shame the somewhat worldly sense of adults.<sup>95</sup>

There are few direct references to religion, although the whole book suggests a concern with the things of the spirit.





Macdonald speaks of God as "the great Love", and it is love which seems to motivate little Diamond -- a love for people which is expressed in a desire to help them.<sup>96</sup> North Wind, herself, is pictured as the instrument of some superior power which directs her to help or to destroy as part of some greater plan which transcends human concepts of right and wrong. To pass through the North Wind to the country at her back is to cross the portals of death into some other world. There are few who come back, but once they have been there, life has a new meaning for them and they fall into a habit of cheerfulness and contentment. All these ideas, however, are woven closely and subtly into the story so that, in actual fact, there is no direct religious teaching.

The last of the fantasies to be considered is Mrs. Molesworth's The Cuckoo Clock (1877). Once again the dominant purpose of the story is indisputably entertainment, although the author has a lesson to teach. The instruction is made palatable, however, by the fact that it comes to the reader through the somewhat crusty utterances of the cuckoo.

Mrs. Molesworth's feeling about children and what should be expected of them reflects the more understanding and sympathetic attitude of the period in which she wrote. She tells her stories from the child's viewpoint, and on occasion even supports the child's sentiments when they come in conflict with those expressed by adults. A case in point occurs in The Cuckoo Clock when Griselda, the central character in the story, rebels against her great aunts'



conception of play.

"Play!" repeated Griselda indignantly, as she turned to follow the old servant. "Do you call walking up and down the terrace 'play', Dorcas? I mustn't loiter even to pick a flower, if there were any, for fear of catching cold, and I mustn't run for fear of overheating myself. I declare, Dorcas, if I don't have some play soon, or something to amuse me, I think I'll run away."<sup>97</sup>

The author never offers to reprove Griselda for voicing such sentiments, although Dorcas is upset at the idea of such naughtiness as running away. Later, when Phil makes his appearance in the woods, the reader is given a picture of the sort of play which delights Griselda.

"But, oh see!" he [Phil] exclaimed, darting off, "there's a field mouse! If only I could catch him!"

Of course he couldn't catch him, nor could Griselda either; very ready, though, she was to do her best. But it was great fun all the same, and the children laughed heartily and enjoyed themselves tremendously. And when they were tired they sat down again and gathered flowers for nosegays, and Griselda was surprised to find how clever Phil was about it.<sup>98</sup>

Griselda also expresses a marked reluctance to mix "improvement" with play. When the cuckoo attempts to supply a few astronomical facts about the moon when he takes the little girl to visit it, she exclaims, "'Oh don't, cuckoo!' . . . 'I want to enjoy myself, and not to have lessons.'"<sup>99</sup>

Old-fashioned although the great-aunts may be, they do not hold any very strict ideas about behaviour and discipline. Occasionally Griselda verges on the impertinent, but, while far from approving of such behaviour, they take into consideration the



circumstances. For example, when Griselda, who has been sick, is annoyed at the prospect of beginning her lessons again and answers her aunt very shortly, her aunt does not even rebuke her, but merely makes a mental note that it is about time Griselda got back to lessons again.<sup>100</sup>

Such an understanding attitude on the part of Griselda's Aunt Grizzel throws her into sharp contrast with such austere correct adults as Mrs. Mason in Original Stories,<sup>101</sup> or Mrs. Benson in The History of the Robins,<sup>102</sup> or Mr. Barlow in Sandford and Merton.<sup>103</sup> Indeed both great-aunts are quite appealing characters, possessed of a number of amusing little idiosyncracies which not only individualize them, but make them more human and believable. They are pictured as dear old souls, kind and gentle, and very fond of Griselda but decidedly spinsterish. Miss Grizzel is the more dominant of the two, Miss Tabitha being seldom more than a slightly delayed echo of her sister. They set great store by their particular remedies; they emphasize the virtues of neatness and precision, and most particularly the faithful discharge of one's duty. Miss Grizzel voices rooted objections to two things in particular -- the verb "smell" (she prefers "scent"), and boys. With respect to the latter aversion, she reacts quite violently to the information that Griselda has been playing with a little boy in the woods.

"But do you know what she has done, Dorcas?" said Miss Grizzel. "Admitted a boy, a rude, common, impertinent boy, into my precincts, and played with him -- with a boy, Dorcas."<sup>104</sup>





It is interesting to note that on Griselda's being refused permission to play with the little boy again she loses her temper completely and is sent to bed early but for playing with a boy, not for her temper and rudeness.<sup>105</sup> The result of this type of characterization is that while one respects Mrs. Molesworth's adult characters, one also views them with a certain amused affection, which is more in line with the newer approach to adults in books for children.

As in her realistic story of home life, "Carrots",<sup>106</sup> Mrs. Molesworth is content to leave religion out if there is no particular artistic reason for bringing it in. The only reference to things religious in The Cuckoo Clock occurs when Griselda goes to bed in a temper, "too cross, alas, to say her prayers!"<sup>107</sup>

#### BOYS' SCHOOL STORIES

The boys' school stories which made their appearance between 1830 and 1900 present a particularly interesting study, for two of the most famous books in this category throw into stark relief the essential differences between the didactic and the liberal approach to children's literature. One is Eric, or Little by Little by Frederic W. Farrar, the other, Stalky and Co. by Rudyard Kipling. First to appear in point of time, however, was Thomas Hughes' Tom Brown's School Days (1857).

Like Catherine Sinclair's Holiday House and Captain Marryat's Masterman Ready, Tom Brown's School Days might well be



considered transitional, for it has the same combination of the old and the new which appeared in the other two books. This alliance with the old is evident particularly in Hughes' avowed purpose in writing the story. In a preface to the sixth edition, he states in answer to the criticism that there is too much preaching in his book:

Why, my whole object in writing at all was to get the chance of preaching! When a man comes to my time of life and has his bread to make, and very little time to spare, is it likely that he will spend almost the whole of his yearly vacation in writing a story just to amuse people? I think not. At any rate, I wouldn't do so myself.<sup>108</sup>

And Hughes does preach, but he does so in a warm, understanding, half-humorous manner which is quite different from that used by most of the didactic writers who preceded him.

In his ideas about young people may be found the same curious mixture of the two schools of thought. He feels that boyhood is merely a preparation for adulthood, and that boys should keep that fact in mind. However, as the ideal to be striven for, he sets up manliness. By manliness, Hughes means a compound of basic goodness and kindness, independence, courage, the ability to think for oneself, and "moral thoughtfulness."<sup>109</sup> According to Hughes, one of the ways of developing a number of these qualities is through enthusiastic participation in sports of all kinds. Furthermore, he is inclined to look almost indulgently upon the pranks and misdemeanours of youth as an indication of an energetic spirit which will later prove the basis of a positive type of manliness.



Hughes' feeling about discipline belongs incontrovertibly to the newer regime. The emphasis is upon the persuasive power of love in bringing about right behaviour. Tom and his great friend, East, are flogged regularly at one period of their school careers for various infractions of rules -- without, however, any appreciable improvement in their behaviour. It is not until a new boy, George Arthur, is put in Tom's protective care that there is a change for the better. His affection for the timid youngster gradually develops into a real love for him, and it is through this love that Tom is prevailed upon to give up using cribs in preparing his lessons -- a practice indulged in by most of the boys at the school and held by them as quite respectable. It is Tom's love for Dr. Arnold, the headmaster, which completes his reformation, for he wants to be what the master approves. East, also, becomes a fine young man through the influence of his affection for Tom and Dr. Arnold.

There is one other point which deserves notice with respect to the attitude of the author to the boyish characters in his book. It is the half-humorous equality which he establishes, not only with Tom and his friends, but also with his youthful readers. He is the public school man talking to the public school boy on a common ground. Schoolboy humour, schoolboy pranks, schoolboy anxieties, schoolboy triumphs -- all are shared. There is no condescension here.

In Hughes' book the perfect adult once more makes his



appearance in the person of Dr. Arnold, the headmaster. This fact is not surprising, for the author evidently felt the same degree of hero-worship which the reader is expected to feel. The book is evidently intended in some sort as/<sup>a</sup>tribute and a memorial to the famous headmaster, for he is always spoken of in glowing terms, whether in the story proper, or in the preface. The few other adults who enter into the story, such as Squire Brown and Mrs. Arthur, are treated with a respect which never thinks to look for faults of any kind.

In its religious content, Tom Brown's School Days is obviously allied with the didactic books of the period 1780 - 1830. The book is not overloaded with piety, but there can be no denying that religion is of importance to the story. Tom's parents are obviously good Christians and concerned with his spiritual welfare;<sup>110</sup> Dr. Arnold is a very devout man, and his sermons to the boys in chapel are occasionally relayed to the reader;<sup>111</sup> but most important in giving a religious tone to the book is young Arthur whom Tom befriends. Arthur's father had been a clergyman, and the youngster is deeply imbued with devotion to God. He it is who brings Tom to a consciousness of his shortcomings in this respect and brings him around to praying nightly,<sup>112</sup> to reading and discussing the Bible,<sup>113</sup> and eventually to giving up the custom of using a crib for his Latin translations.<sup>114</sup> It is on a religious note that the book ends as Tom, now a young man, kneels before the altar in the chapel and pays a silent tribute to Dr. Arnold who has just died.





The second of the boys' school stories which followed closely on the heels of Tom Brown's School Days, would seem to be a complete throw-back to the 1780 - 1850 period of heavy didacticism. Frederic W. Farrar wrote Eric; or, Little by Little (1858) to correct what he considered to be a false impression of public school life. His book tells the story of a young boy who, in spite of a basically good character and above-average intelligence, is gradually led into evil ways by his schoolboy companions. With each step the boy takes along the downward path, Farrar expands eloquently on its significance and warns the reader passionately against like errors. This is pure didacticism in the typical Sherwood manner, and in most respects the book continues to run true to didactic form.

There is no objection to the caning and flogging which are meted out to poor scholars, or more serious offenders. What Farrar does condemn is the failure of masters to be continually on the look-out for misbehaviour. He remarks of one young master that he "was fresh at his work, and had not yet learnt the practical lesson . . . that to trust young boys to any great extent is really to increase their temptations."<sup>115</sup> Obviously the author has no confidence in the basic goodness of children.<sup>116</sup>

In his preoccupation with painting a sombre picture of the dangers of public school life, Farrar introduces one note at variance with the earlier didactic literature. He fills most of the positions in the school with masters who are weak, sarcastic,



or lacking in understanding. However, he strives to balance the imperfection of these men with the characterizations of such noble and faultless individuals as the headmaster and the parents of Eric. The purpose of Eric lends itself wholly to religious teaching. A concern for the spiritual welfare of Eric is never absent from the book, and the reader is exposed to sermon after sermon on the subject -- delivered by the author, by Eric's parents, by his aunt, by his better friends, or even through the thoughts of Eric himself. Even the death-bed scenes of Russell, and finally of Eric, are painfully prolonged for the purpose of driving home religious ideas in situations calculated to make the reader receptive to, and impress him with, their seriousness.

There can be no doubt that Eric; or Little by Little is as typical of didactic literature as any book which came out of the period from 1780 to 1830; but the very fact of the startling contrast which it makes to the other books being published at the same time is proof of the fairly widespread change which had come over children's literature. The contrast is never more striking than when Eric is placed beside Rudyard Kipling's Stalky and Co. Coming as it does at the end of the century, 1899 to be exact, the latter is the embodiment of all that is gayest and most amusing in Victorian literature for children. No vestige of formal didacticism is to be found within its pages.

The very first sentence tells the reader what he can expect.

In summer all right-minded boys built huts  
in the furze-hill behind the College -- little



lairs whittled out of the heart of the prickly bushes, full of stumps, odd root-ends, and spikes, but, since they were strictly forbidden, palaces of delight.<sup>117</sup>

That such flagrant disregard of rules is attributed to all "right-minded" boys is proof of the great difference between the literature at the end of the eighteenth century and that at the end of the nineteenth. Furthermore, the author apparently has no change of heart as the book progresses, no desire to reform his three main characters -- Stalky, M'Turk, and Beetle. He tells the story, not as a boy himself, but from the boys' point of view, and he glories in every scrape they get into and worm out of, as well as every predicament they manage to get their masters into.

There is no question of their being inferior to their adult masters (with the exception of the Padre and the Head). Rather they manage to confound them utterly whenever the latter interfere with them. When Mr. Prout and Mr. King (both masters) and Foxy, the red-haired school Sergeant attempt to catch the three breaking bounds, Stalky and his wily companions contrive to get them stopped by the peppery Colonel Dabney for poaching on his estate.<sup>118</sup> When King encourages the boys in his house to cast aspersions on the cleanliness of Prout's house -- which includes Stalky and Co. -- the three inseparables succeed in placing a dead cat between the joists of King's house, an action which shortly turns the tables, to the glee of those originally maligned.<sup>119</sup>

As far as discipline is concerned, the three boys to a large extent manage to evade punishment, such evasion being part





of the game of outwitting the masters. They have no respect for authority or for regulations, except those imposed upon them specifically by the Head. Here is a modification of the principle of discipline through love. The boys admire and respect the Head, and are therefore prepared to obey him. On the other hand, their attitude to the other masters is quite otherwise. They recognize the fact that these in general lean heavily on the letter of the law, and the boys exploit this fortunate weakness by keeping on the right side of the law, in fact if not in spirit. This cunning usually saves them punishment unless the matter is referred to the Head, who shows himself invariably prepared to cope with them. After the poaching episode, they are brought before him, secure in the knowledge that they have done nothing against the rules.

'Good evening,' said he when the three appeared under escort. 'I want your undivided attention for a few minutes. You've known me for five years, and I've known you for -- twenty-five. I think we understand one another perfectly. I am now going to pay you a tremendous compliment. (The brown one, please, Sergeant. Thanks. You needn't wait.) I'm going to execute you without rhyme, Beetle, or reason. I know you went to Colonel Dabney's covers because you were invited. I'm not even going to send the Sergeant with a note to ask if your statement is true; because I am convinced that, on this occasion, you have adhered strictly to the truth. I know, too, that you were not drinking. (You can take off that virtuous expression, M'Turk, or I shall begin to fear you don't understand me.) There is not a flaw in any of your characters. And that is why I am going to perpetrate a howling injustice.'<sup>120</sup>

The Head then proceeds to give them six strokes apiece -- and the loan of some paper-back books on his shelf. The interview is



highly satisfactory to all concerned. In the Head are combined an understanding of boys, a sense of humour, and a keen awareness of what is necessary to a maintenance of discipline. Certainly the Head and his ideas are far removed from those of Mr. Barlow in Sandford and Merton, or Mr. Fairchild in The Fairchild Family.

Kipling, as one might expect, has a field day in conveying the portraits of the masters to a reading public. Observed through the irreverent eyes of three keen observers, their weaknesses and imperfections of character are laid bare with high good humour. Mr. Prout, well-meaning and anxious to do his duty, but desperately unsure of himself, particularly when he comes up against Stalky and Co.; little Hartopp, President of the Natural History Society, a bit suspicious of boys, the possessor of a "gentle little soul",<sup>121</sup> and an enthusiast; Mr. King, arrogant, sarcastic, vindictive, a past master at the art of eloquent invective, but inclined to let his eloquence and his temper lead him too far -- these three bear the brunt of the attentions of Stalky, Bettle, and M'Turk. They are made ridiculous in their attempts to cope with the redoubtable three, their authority is continually flouted, and they invariably come out second best in any contest of wits. The only two adults who hold the respect of the boys, as has been mentioned before, are the Padre and the Head, both of whom get along well with them, the Head because he understands them and is usually one step ahead of them, the Padre because he understands boys and never mixes his official capacity with his unofficial one. These



two bring a certain humour into their dealings with the boys. After one particular scrape, the Padre drops in to talk to Stalky and his friends. The conversation is progressing merrily when there is a knock upon the door.

'The Head to see Number Five study in his study at once,' said the voice of Foxy, the school sergeant.

'Whew!' said the Reverend John. 'It seems to me that there is a great deal of trouble coming for some people.'

'My word! Mr. Prout's gone and told the Head,' said Stalky. 'He's a moral double-ender. Not fair, luggin' the Head into a house-row.'

'I should recommend a copy-book on a --h'm -- safe and certain part,' said the Reverend John disinterestedly.<sup>122</sup>

The Head in his official capacity cannot afford to give any overt sign of his amusement, but it is clear that he has a well-developed sense of humour, even if it is indicated only by the slight twitching of his mouth under his moustache when he learns of the poaching episode,<sup>123</sup> or by his remark after the caning as he offers the boys a pile of paperbacks: "'I don't think they'll take any harm from being read in the open. They smell of tobacco rather.'"124

Obviously Stalky and Co. owes nothing to the preceding boys' school stories, Tom Brown's School Days or Eric; or Little by Little. It is completely fresh and original, as it proves by its lack of didacticism, and its unorthodox approach to the presentation of both boys and adults. It is no less individual in its handling of religion. Where the inclusion of a padre as one of main characters might suggest that religion is to be given an important role, such is not the case. The Reverend John serves



only as an example of the sort of adult the boys appreciate and give their friendship to. "He was emphatically a gentleman. He knocked at a study door before entering; he comported himself as a visitor and not a strayed lictor; he never prosed, and he never carried over into official life the confidences of idle hours."<sup>125</sup> Religion as such is never mentioned.

With Stalky and Co. concludes the survey of some of the more important and characteristic books of the period from 1830 to 1900, a survey which should make it clear that on the whole these books differ radically from those of the fifty-year period preceding 1830.





FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

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41. Ibid., p. 7.
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43. The story of Ready's earlier life which he recounts to the family includes a number of escapades which are not praiseworthy, but his complete reform is made clear to the reader.
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63. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
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69. See p. 104.
70. It is worth noting that the purpose of The Home Treasury is made quite clear in the complete title -- Felix Summerly's Home Treasury of Pleasure Books for Young Children. (See Muir, op. cit., p. 198.)
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85. Ibid., p. 92.



86. Carroll, Lewis, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, London: Macmillan and Co., 1867, Introductory Poem.
87. See Appendix, Section F.
88. Carroll, op. cit., p. 18.
89. Macdonald, George, At the Back of the North Wind, London: Blackie and Son Limited, n.d., pp. 162-63.
90. See p. 23.
91. Macdonald, op. cit., pp. 156-59.
92. Ibid., pp. 185-92.
93. This picture of the child reformer is not an entirely new one. It harks back to the good Godly books of such writers as Janeway (see p. 4). But, on the other hand, Diamond is not a conscious reformer as were most of the good Godly children. He only wants to make people happy.
94. Macdonald, op. cit., pp. 227-36.
95. Ibid., pp. 193-200.
96. Ibid., p. 188.
97. Molesworth, "The Cuckoo Clock," op. cit., p. 24.
98. Ibid., p. 82.
99. Ibid., p. 101.
100. Ibid., p. 55.
101. See p. 31.
102. See p. 23.
103. See p. 32.
104. Molesworth, "The Cuckoo Clock," op. cit., p. 87.
105. Ibid., pp. 85-87.
106. See pp. 116-17.
107. Molesworth, "The Cuckoo Clock," op. cit., p. 57.
108. Hughes, Thomas, Tom Brown's School Days, London: Macmillan Co., Ltd., 1904, p. xiii.



109. Ibid., p. xv.
110. Ibid., pp. 60-61.
111. Ibid., p. 249.
112. Ibid., pp. 183-87.
113. Ibid., p. 194.
114. Ibid., pp. 255-56.
115. Farrar, Frederic W., Eric, or Little by Little, Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1875, p. 46.
116. Farrar does paint some pictures of excellent boys such as Russell and Montagu. Their goodness, particularly that of the former, seems to be the result of a deeply religious nature and a close relationship to God. Thus they serve mainly to underline the basic religious teaching of the author.
117. Kipling, Rudyard, Stalky and Co., London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1954, p. 1.
118. Ibid., pp. 1-37.
119. Ibid., pp. 64-98.
120. Ibid., pp. 34-35.
121. Ibid., p. 2.
122. Ibid., p. 126.
123. Ibid., p. 34.
124. Ibid., p. 35.
125. Ibid., p. 130.



## CONCLUSION

Having examined in detail the more important prose literature written in England specifically for children during the years 1780 - 1900, it only remains here to sum up in conclusion the main features of this literature.

In general it might be said that during the years 1780 - 1830 the keynote of children's prose was its preoccupation with didacticism. Although ostensibly leisure reading, this literature had as its purpose the preparation of the young reader for eventual maturity by contributing to his moral and spiritual stature, his knowledge of polite behaviour, or his store of factual information. It was found also that closely related to this purposeful concept of children's literature was the idea that the child was merely a potential adult, and that childhood was a preparation for adulthood. Thus the child was regarded as an inferior being who must yield to the authority of his parent or tutor in all matters and must accord him instant and unquestioning obedience. The natural pursuits of childhood tended to be discredited unless they contributed directly towards achieving the goal of maturity. High standards of behaviour were the order of the day, enforced by consciously superior and humourless adults. In many of the books appeared a deeply religious strain, which was accompanied by a keen awareness of the innate sinfulness of man and a corresponding concern for the spiritual welfare of the child. The final point which appeared was the notable lack of variety in children's literature, the realistic and educational alone finding favour with adults.





Such literature would seem to offer little in the way of pleasurable reading for the average child, and on this score some of the twentieth-century critics condemn it. Percy Muir in particular presents a rather biased picture of the didactic writers in his English Children's Books. He tags them with the appellation "Monstrous Regiment" and proceeds to indicate his dislike by such words as "nauseating", "appalling", and "preposterous". Day's Sandford and Merton, in particular, draws Muir's fire. He attacks it for its lack of narrative, for its conscious didacticism, and for the characterization of Harry and Tommy. Harry he calls "the world's prize prig" and the "archtype" of "insufferable little goody-goodies". He calls Tommy "the little ignoremus". Actually, these judgments are far severer than the evidence warrants. The narrative interest holds quite well within the accounts of individual happenings, and although there is no direct link between incidents, they are held together in some measure by the gradual development of Tommy. Such characters as Mr. Barlow and Mr. and Mrs. Merton stand out as definite individuals despite their tendency to use the same sort of elegant language. As for Harry and Tommy, it seems unfair to label as a prig a youngster who is good in accordance with what he has been taught; and equally unfair to call "ignoramus" a little boy who has never had an opportunity to learn. Darton may go too far when he calls Sandford and Merton a great book, but to call it a "feast of nausea" as Muir does, is to suggest that the reader is bringing a good deal of prejudice to his evaluation.



Furthermore, Muir fails to give credit to the didactic writers for one particularly important contribution which they made to literature for children, namely the use of good English. The beautifully cadenced phrases of Mrs. Barbauld's Hymns in Prose, the elegant, if somewhat stilted, diction of Mrs. Trimmer's History of the Robins, the clear and gripping style of Mrs. Sherwood's History of the Fairchild Family, were far superior to anything previously written for children.

While giving the didactic writers their due, however, one must not underestimate the great strides made from 1830 to 1900 towards providing leisure reading for children which would fulfill the same purpose for them as adult fiction did for their parents. Just how striking was the change appears from the conclusions which may be drawn from the study of the juvenile books of that period.

First and foremost, pleasure had become the primary consideration of authors in writing for children. If writers did attempt to improve their readers, it was to a limited degree, and usually through example, rather than by precept. A good illustration is A Roving Commission in which Henty presents an exciting plot and a manly hero. On the other hand, in such works as the Alice books of Lewis Carroll, and Treasure Island by Stevenson, and Kipling's Stalky and Co. the authors obviously have no concern whatever with instruction.

Another aspect of children's literature to undergo a



transformation after 1830 was the attitude to the child. He had become important in his own right, and what he said, thought, and did, was looked upon not only with indulgence but with interest. This new importance of the child appears in such tales as "Carrots" and "The Cuckoo Clock" by Mrs. Molesworth, where each story is told from the child's point of view. Catherine Sinclair's Holiday House further shows the changing attitude by favouring a far less rigid discipline than that in effect previously, by making adults far less exacting, and by indicating that minor misdemeanours should be attributed to high spirits or childish mischief, rather than to wickedness. The effect of all this upon the child as he appears in the literature is to give him a warmer, freer, more natural character.

The adult, too, had undergone a change. In the literature of the later period, the "perfect adult" of the didactic period becomes a more realistic being who is not above making mistakes, and who possesses certain qualities which draw the respect and affectionate regard of the reader. Such a character as Mr. Kennedy in Ballantyne's The Young Fur Traders, for example, is shown as a crusty, irascible, unreasonable individual, but he does not forfeit the sympathy of the reader because at the same time he possesses a deep love for his son and a desire to do the best he can for him.

Religion, which had played such an important part in children's literature previously, after 1830 joined morals and manners as a subject not to be brought in for its own sake. In







such books as Ewing's Jan of the Windmill and Kipling's Stalky and Co., even ministers play fairly significant roles without ensuring a religious content to the story. Last but not least among the changes wrought in children's literature was the exciting variety now open to the choice of young readers, a variety which embraced the real and the fanciful, the serious and the humorous, and was found in both prose and poetry.

A change of such magnitude obviously could not stem from some insignificant cause; indeed -- as has been noted -- behind the transformation in children's literature was an almost complete revolution in the thoughts and attitudes of people in general. This revolution in public opinion was prompted by widespread forces at work in society. Probably the basic and most powerful influence was that of romanticism. In the years 1780 to 1830 it was the neo-classic approach to life which was mirrored most clearly in the children's literature and accounted for its didacticism, its attitudes to children and adults, and its objection to imaginative stories. In the later period, 1830 to 1900, however, the increasing effect of romanticism on society was responsible not only for the shift in emphasis from didacticism to entertainment as the primary purpose of children's literature, and for the new attitude to children and adults, but also for the introduction of variety in children's books.

During the early period, Wesleyanism contributed to the children's literature a strong religious strain and the concept of



the sinful child. After 1830, when Wesleyanism changed its emphasis, the insistent religion in children's books disappeared and the idea of the sinful child gave way to the romantic attitude. A more positive contribution to the changing ideas came through the strongly humanitarian aspect of Wesleyanism which, together with the humanitarianism encouraged by romanticism, operated in both educational and economic spheres to bring about better educational opportunities for children and a reform of the abuses of the factory system. At the same time, the widespread and vigorous campaign necessary to achieving these results served to shape society's thinking on the subject of the rights of children.

Also of consequence in moulding the public's attitude in each period were the educational theories most influential at the time. Thus in the years 1780 to 1830, Locke's emphasis on habitual good behaviour gave added force to didacticism, but after 1830 the stress placed by Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel on the natural development of children made the child's own interests of first importance.

With this brief summary concludes this study of children's prose written in England during the years 1780 to 1900. However, in the whole question of the development of children's literature much remains to be done. A fruitful study, for example, would be that of the poetry written for children over the same period, or the evolution of the adventure story for children. There are innumerable possibilities for research.



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## APPENDIX

### A

#### THE LYTYLLE CHILDRENES LYTIL BOKE OR

#### EDYLLYS BE

Lytylle childrene, here ye may lere  
Moche curtesy that is wrytyne here;  
For clerkis that the vij artez cunne,  
Seyn that curtesy from hevyn come  
Whan Gabryelle oure lady grette,  
And Elizabeth with mary mette.  
Alle vertues arne closide yn curtesye,  
And alle vices yn vylonye.  
Loke thyne hondis be wasshe clene,  
That no fylthe on thy nayles be sene.  
Take thou no mete tylle grace be seyde,  
And tylle thou see alle thyng arayed.  
Loke, my son, that thow not sytte  
Tylle the ruler of the hous the bydde;  
And at thy mete, yn the begynnynge,  
Loke on pore men that thow thynk,  
For the fulle wombe without (any faylys)  
Wot fulle lytyl (what the hungry aylys.)  
Ete (not thy mete to hastely,  
A-byde and ete esely.  
Tylle thou haue thy fulle seruyse,  
Touche noo messe in noo wyse.  
Kerue not thy brede to thynne,  
Ne breke hit not on twynne:  
The mosselle that thou begynnysse to touche,  
Cast them not in thy pouche.  
Put not thy fyngerys on thy dysche,  
Nothyr in flesche, nothyr in fysche.  
Put not thy mete in-to the salte,  
In-to thy Seler that thy salte halte,)   
But ley it fayre on thi trenchere  
The byfore, and that is thyne honore.  
Pyke not thyne Eris ne thy nostrellis;  
If thou do, men wolle sey thou come of cherlis.  
And whylle thi mete yn thi mouth is,  
Drynk thow not; for-gete not this.  
Ete thi mete by smalle mosselles;  
Fylle not thy mouth as done brothellis.  
Pyke not thi tethe with thy knyfe;  
In no company begynne thow stryfe.  
And whan thou hast thi potage doone,  
Out of thy dyssh thow put thi spone.  
Ne spitte thow not over the tabylle,



Ne therupon, for that is no thing abyлле.  
Ley not thyne Elbowe nor thy fyst  
Vpon the tabylle whyllis that thou etist.  
Bulk not as a Beene were yn thi throte,  
(As a ka)rlе that comys oute of a cote.  
(And thy mete be o)f grete pryce,  
(Be ware of hyt, or thou arte n)ot wyse.  
(Speke noo worde stylle ne sterke;  
And honowre and curtesy loke thou kepe,  
And at the tabylle loke thou make goode chere;  
Loke thou rownde not in nomannys ere.  
With thy fyngerys thou towche and taste  
Thy mete; And loke thou doo noo waste.  
Loke thou laughe not, nor grenne;  
And with moche speche thou mayste do synne.  
Mete ne drynke loke thou ne spylle,  
But sette hit downe fayre and stylle.)  
Kepe thy cloth clene the byforne,  
And bere the so thou haue no scorne.  
Byte not thi mete, but kerve it clene,  
Be welle ware no drop be sene.  
What thou etyst, gape not to wyde  
That thi mouth be sene on yche a syde.  
And son, beware, I rede, of on thyng,  
Blow nether yn thi mete nor yn thi drynk.  
And yif thi lord drynk at that tyde,  
Drynk thou not, but hym abyde;  
Be it at Evyne, be it at noone,  
Drynk thou not tylle he haue done.  
Vpon thi trencher no fyllthe thou see,  
It is not honest, as I telle the;  
Ne drynk behynde no mannes bakke,  
For yf thou do, thou art to lakke.  
And chese come forthe, be not to gredy,  
Ne cutte thou not thereof to hastely.  
Caste not thi bones ynto the flore,  
But ley them fayre on thi trenchore.  
Kepe clene thi cloth byfore the alle;  
And sit thou stylle, what so be-falle,  
Tylle grace be said vnto the ende,  
And tylle thou haue wasshen with thi frend.  
Let the more worthy than thou  
Wassh to-fore the, & that is thi prow;  
And spitte not yn thi basyne,  
My swete son, that thou wasshist yne;  
And aryse up soft & stylle,  
And iangylle nether with lak ne lylle,  
But take thi leve of the hede lowly,  
And thank hym with thyne hert hyghly,  
And alle the gentyllis togydre yn-same,





And bare the so thow haue no blame;  
Than men wylle say therafter  
That a gentylloman was heere.  
And he that dispiseth this techyng,  
He is not worthy, withoute lesyng,  
Nether at good mannes tabulle to sitte,  
Ner of no worshipec for to wytte.  
And therefore, chyldren, for charyte,  
Louyth this boke though yt lytil be!  
And pray for hym that made it thus,  
That hym may helpe swete Ihesus  
To lyve & dye among his frendes,  
And neuer to be combred with no fendes;  
And geve vs grace yn Ioy to be;  
Amen, Amen, for charytee!

EXPLICIT. lerne or be lewde  
quod Whytyng.

Amen.

Here endythe the boke of Curtesy that ys fulle necessary vnto yonge  
chyldryn that muste nedys lerne the maner of curtesy.

EXPLICIT. AMEN.

(From The Babees Book, ed. F. J. Furnivall, E.E.T.S. No. 32,  
London: N. Trubner & Co., 1868.)

B

How a knight's daughter lost her marriage by her vanity.

I shall tell you of a ensauple of a knightes doughter that  
lost her mariage bi her nisite. Ther was a knight that had iiij  
doughters, of the which the eldest was wedded, and there was a knight  
that axed the secounde doughter bothe for londe and mariage; in so  
moche that the knight come for to see her that shulde be his wyyf  
and forto be assured and fyanced togedre, yef thei were plesed eche  
with other, for neither of hem ne hadde saie other before that tyme.  
And the damoiselle that knew of the knightes comyng, she araied her  
selff in the best guyse that she coude, forto haue a sclender and  
a faire shapin body, and she clothed her in a cote hardy vnfurred, the  
whiche satte right streite upon her, and it was gret colde, gret froste,  
and gret wynde; and for the simple vesture that she had vpon, and for  
the gret colde that was atte that tyme, the coloure of the mayde was  
defaced, and she waxe al pale and blake of colde. So this knight  
that was come forto see her, and behelde the coloure of her all ded  
and pale, and after that he loked upon that other suster that she





had, and sawe her coloure fresshe and ruddy as a rose, for she was wel clothed, and warme ayenst the colde, as she that thought not upon no mariage atte so shorte a tyme, the knight behelde furst that one suster and after<sup>that</sup> other. And whanne he had dyned, he cleped two of his frendes and of his kynne, and saide vnto hem, "Sires! we be come hedir for to see the daughters of the lorde of this place, and y know wel that y shulde haue whiche that y wolde chese, wherfor y wolde haue the thridde doughter." And his frendes ansuered hym, that it was more worship vnto hym for to haue the elder. "Faire frendes," saide the knight, "ye see but litell avauntage thereinne, for ye knowe wel thei haue an elder suster, the whiche is wedded; and also y see the yongest, the fairest and fresshest of coloure, more plesaunt thanne her secounde suster, for whom y was spoken vnto forto haue in mariage; and therfor my plesaunce is to haue her." And the knight axed the thridde doughter, whiche was graunted hym; wherof folke were meruailed, and in especial the mayde that went forto haue be wedded vnto the same knight. So it happed within short tyme after, thei married the yonge damaysell, the whiche the knight hadde refused bi cause the colde had paled her coloure and withdrowe her fayrenesse; after, whanne she was well clothed and furred, and the wedir was chaunged to warmer, her colour and fairenesse was comen ayen, so that she was fressher and fayrer an hundred parte thanne was her suster, the knightes wiff; and so the knight saide vnto her, "My faire suster, whanne y was to wedde, and y come forto see you, ye were not so faire bi the seuenthe part as ye be now, for ye be now right faire and well coloured, and tho ye were all pale and of other coloure, and now ye passe youre suster, my wyff, in fayrenesse, wherof y haue gret meruaile." And thanne the knightis wiff ansuered, "My lorde, y shal tell you how it was; my suster thought wel that ye shulde come forto fiaunce her as for youre wiff; and forto make her gentill, and small, and faire bodied, she clothed her in a symple cote hardye, not doubled; and it was cold wynter, and gret froste, and gret wynde, and that permued her coloure; and y, that thought as muche to haue suche welthe and worship as forto haue you vnto my lorde withoute ani nisete, y clothed my selff in warme furred gounes that kepte my body warme, wherfore I had better colour than she had, wherof I thanke God, For therfore I gate your loue; And blessyd be the houre that my suster clothed her self so lyght, For yf it had not be so, ye had not take me for to haue lefte her." Thus loste, as ye haue herd, theldest doughter her maryage, bycause she coynted her self. Now haue ye herd good Ensample how one ought not to coynte her body for to shewe it small and better shapen, & specially in the wynter, in so moche that she lost her manere and colour. As ones it befell to Syre Foucques de Laual, as he told me vpon the fayt of this Ensample, of whome I shal speke, and telle vnto yow what that happed to hym.

(From The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry, ed. Thomas Wright, Revised edition, 1906, Early English Text Society, O.S., No. 33, London: Kegan Paul, 1906.)



EXAMPLE IX

Of a Child that was very eminent, when she was between Five and Six Years old, with some memorable Passages of her Life, who died about 1640.

1. Anne Lane was born of honest Parents in Colebrook, in the County of Bucks, who was no sooner able to speak plain, and express any Thing considerable of Reason, but she began to act as if she were sanctified from the very Womb.
2. She was very solicitous about her Soul, what would become of it when she should die, and where she should live for ever, and what she should do to be saved, when she was about Five Years old.
3. She was wont to be oft engaged in secret Prayer, and pouring out her Soul in such a Manner, as is rarely to be heard of from one of her Years.
4. I having Occasion to lie at Colebrook, sent for her Father, an old Disciple, an Israelite indeed, and desired him to give me some Account of his Experiences, and how the Lord first wrought upon him?
5. He gave me this answer, "That he was of a Child somewhat civil; honest, and as to a Man, harmless; but he was little acquainted with the Power of Religion, 'till this sweet Child put him upon a thorow Inquiry into the State of his Soul, and would still be begging of him, and pleading with him to redeem his Time, and to act with Life and Vigour in the Things of God, which was no small Demonstration to him of the Reality of Invisibles, that a very Babe and Suckling should speak so feelingly about the Things of God, and be so greatly concerned, not only about her own Soul, but about her Father's too, which was the Occasion of his Conversion, and the very Thought of it was a quickening to him for thirty Years, and he hopes never to wear off the Impression of it from his Spirit.
6. After this she (as I remember) put her Father upon Family Duties, and if he were for any Time out of his Shop, she would find him out, and with much Sweetness and Humility beg of him to come Home, and to remember the Preciousness of Time, for which we must all give an Account.
7. She was grieved if she saw any that conversed with her Father if they were unprofitable, unsavory, or long in their Discourse of common Things.





8. Her own Language was the Language of Canaan: How solidly, profitably, and spiritually would she talk? So that she made good People take great Delight in her Company, and justly drew the Admiration of all that knew her.

9. She could not endure the Company of common Children, nor Play, but was quite above all those Things which most Children are taken with; her Business was to be reading, praying, discoursing about the Things of God, and any Kind of Business that her Age and Strength was capable of; idle she would not be by any Means.

10. It was the greatest Recreation to her to hear any good People talking about God, Christ, their Souls, the Scriptures, or any Thing that concerned another Life.

11. She had a strange Contempt of the World, and scorned those Things which most are too much pleased with. She could not be brought to wear any Laces, or any Thing that she thought superfluous.

12. She would be complaining to her Parents if she saw any Thing in them that she judged would not be for the Honour of Religion, or suitable to that Condition which the Providence of God had set them in, in the World.

13. This Child was the Joy and Delight of all the Christians thereabouts, in those Times, who was still quickning and raising of the Spirits of those that talked with her. This poor Babe was a great Help to both Father and Mother, and her Memory is sweet to this Day.

14. She continued thus to walk as a Stranger in the World, and one that was making haste to a better Place. And after she had done a great Deal of Work for God and her own Soul, and others too, she was called Home to rest, and received into the Arms of JESUS, before she was ten Years old; she departed about 1640.

(From James Janeway's A Token for Children, Being An Exact Account of the Conversion, Holy and Exemplary Lives and Joyful Deaths of several YOUNG CHILDREN, To which is added, A token for the Children of New-England, or, Some Examples of CHILDREN, in whom the Fear of GOD was remarkably Budding before they died; in several Parts of NEW-England. Preserved and Published for the Encouragement of PIETY in other Children, Boston: Z Fowle, 1771, pp. 55-58.)

D

When by spectators I am told  
What beauty doth adorn me,  
Or in a glass when I behold



How sweetly God did form me --  
Hath God such comliness bestowed  
And on me made to dwell --  
What pity such a pretty maid  
As I should go to Hell.

(Quoted in Anthology of Children's Literature, edd. Johnson, Scott, Sickels, 2nd ed., Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948, p. 974. According to Muir in his English Children's Books, it introduces the book by Abraham Chear, Henry Jessey, and P. H. entitled Looking Glass for Children which was published in 1672-3.)

E

POEMS BY JOHN BUNYAN

The awakened Childs Lamentation

When Adam was deceived,  
I was of Life bereaved;  
Of late (too) I perceived,  
I was in sin conceived.

And as I was born naked,  
I was with filth bespaked,  
At which when I awaked,  
My Soul and Spirit shaken.

My Filth grew strong, and boyled,  
And me throughout defiled,  
Its pleasures me beguiled,  
My Soul! how art thou spoiled!

My Joys with sin were painted,  
My mind with sin is tainted,  
My heart with Guilt is fainted,  
I wa'nt with God acquainted.

I have in sin abounded,  
My heart therewith is wounded,  
With fears I am surrounded,  
My Spirit is confounded.

I have been often called,  
By sin as oft enthralled,  
Pleasures hath me fore-stalled.  
How is my Spirit gauled!





As sin has me infected,  
I am thereof deteched:  
Mercy I have neglected,  
I fear I am rejected.

The World I have mis-used  
Good Council too refused;  
Thus I my Self abused;  
How can I be excused?

When other Children prayed,  
That work I then delayed,  
Ran up and down and played,  
And thus from God have strayed.

Had I in God delighted,  
And my wrong doing's righted;  
I had not thus been frighted,  
Nor as I am benighted.

Oh! That God would be pleased,  
T'wards me to be appeased;  
And heal me thus diseased,  
How should I then be eased!

. . . . .

O Lord! do not disdain me,  
But kindly entertain me;  
Yea in thy Faith maintain me,  
And let thy Love constrain me!

Upon the Suns Reflection upon the Clouds in a fair Morning

Look yonder, ah! Methinks mine eyes do see,  
Clouds edg'd with silver, as fine Garments be!  
They look as if they saw that Golden face,  
That makes black Clouds most beautiful with Grace.

Unto the Saints sweet incense or their Prayer,  
These Smoaky curdled Clouds do I compare.  
For as these Clouds seem edg'd or lac'd with Gold,  
Their Prayers return with Blessings manifold.

Upon the Boy on his Hobby-horse

Look how he swaggers, cocks his Hat and rides,  
How on his Hobby-horse, himself he prides:  
He looketh grim, and up his Head doth toss,  
Says he'll ride over's with his Hobby-horse.



Comparison.

Some we see mounted upon the Conceit  
That their Wit, Wealth, or Beauty is so great:  
But few their Equals may with them compare,  
Who yet more Godly, Wise, and Honest are.  
Behold how huff, how big they look; how high  
They lift their heads, as if they'd touch the Skie:  
Nor will they count these things, for Christ, a loss  
So long as they do ride this Hobby-horse.

Upon a Ring of Bells.

Bells have wide mouths and tongues, but are too weak,  
Have they not help, to sing, or talk, or speak  
But if you move them they will mak't appear,  
By speaking they'll make all the Town to hear.

When Ringers handle them with Art and Skill,  
They then the ears of the Observers fill,  
With such brave Notes, they ting and tang so well  
As to out strip all with their ding, dong, Bell.

Comparison.

These Bells are like the Powers of my Soul;  
Their Clappers to the Passions of my mind  
The Ropes by which my Bells are made to tole,  
Are Promises (I by experience find).

My body is the Steeple, where they hang,  
My Graces they which do ring ev'ry Bell:  
Nor is there any thing gives such a tang,  
When by these Ropes these Ringers ring them well.

Let not my Bells these Ringers want, nor Ropes;  
Yea let them have room for to swing and sway:  
To toss themselves deny them not their Scopes.  
Lord! in my Steeple give them room to play.  
If they do tole, ring out, or chime all in,  
They drown the tempting tinckling Voice of Vice:  
Lord! when my Bells have gone, my Soul has bin  
As 'twere a tumbling in this Paradise!

Or if these Ringers do the Changes ring,  
Upon my Bells, they do such Musick make,  
My Soul then (Lord) cannot but bounce and sing,  
So greatly her they with their Musick take.  
But boys (my Lusts) unto my Belfry go,  
And pull these Ropes, but do no Musick make  
They rather turn my Bells by what they do,  
Or by disorder make my Steeple shake.

Then, Lord! I pray thee keep my Belfry Key,  
Let none but Graces meddle with these Ropes:



And when these naughty Boys come, say them Nay,  
From such Ringers of Musick there's no hopes.

Oh Lord! If they poor Child might have his will,  
And might his meaning freely to thee tell;  
He never of this Musick has his fill,  
There's nothing to him like thy ding, dong, Bell.

### Upon the Frog.

The Frog by Nature is both damp and cold,  
Her Mouth is large, her Belly much will hold:  
She sits somewhat ascending, loves to be  
Croaking in Gardens, tho unpleasantly.

### Comparison.

The Hyppocrite is like unto this Frog;  
As like as is the Puppy to the Dog.  
He is of nature cold, his Mouth is wide,  
To prate, and at true Goodness to deride,  
He mounts his Head, as if he was above  
The World, when yet 'tis that which has his Love.  
And though he seeks in Churches for to croak,  
He neither loveth Jesus, nor his Yoak.

(From John Bunyan's A Book for Boys and Girls; or, Country Rhymes for Children, facsimile of unique first edition, London: Elliot Stock, 1890. First published 1686.)

## F

### POEMS BY ISAAC WATTS

#### The All-Seeing God

ALMIGHTY God, thy piercing eye  
Strikes through the shades of night;  
And our most secret actions lie  
All open to thy sight.

There's not a sin that we commit,  
Nor wicked word we say,  
But in thy dreadful book 'tis writ,  
Against the judgment day.

And must the crimes that I have done  
Be read and publish'd there;  
Be all expos'd before the sun,  
While men and angels hear?





Lord, at thy foot asham'd I lie;  
Upward I dare not look;  
Pardon my sins before I die,  
And blot them from thy book.

Remember all the dying pains  
That my Redeemer felt,  
And let his blood wash out my stains,  
And answer for my guilt.

O may I now for ever fear  
To indulge a sinful thought;  
Since the great God can see and hear,  
And writes down every fault.

### Heaven and Hell

THERE is beyond the sky  
A heaven of joy and love;  
And holy children, when they die,  
Go to that world above.

There is a dreadful hell,  
And everlasting pains;  
There sinners must with devils dwell,  
In darkness, fire, and chains.

Can such a wretch as I  
Escape this cursed end?  
And may I hope, whene'er I die,  
I shall to heaven ascend?

Then I for grace will pray,  
While I have life and breath;  
Lest I should be cut off to-day,  
And sent to eternal death.

### AGAINST QUARRELLING AND FIGHTING

LET dogs delight to bark and bite,  
For God hath made them so;  
Let bears and lions growl and fight,  
For 'tis their nature too.

But, children, you should never let  
Such angry passions rise;  
Your little hands were never made  
To tear each other's eyes.



Let love through all your actions run,  
And all your words be mild;  
Live like the blessed virgin's Son,  
That sweet and lovely Child.

His soul was gentle as a lamb;  
And as his stature grew,  
He grew in favour both with man,  
And God his Father too.

Now, Lord of all, he reigns above,  
And from his heavenly throne,  
He sees what children dwell in love,  
And marks them for his own.

#### Against Idleness and Mischief

HOW doth the little busy bee  
Improve each shining hour,  
And gather honey all the day  
From every opening flower!

How skilfully she builds her cell!  
How neat she spreads the wax!  
And labours hard to store it well  
With the sweet food she makes.

In works of labour or of skill,  
I would be busy too;  
For Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do.

In books, or work, or healthful play,  
Let my first years be past;  
That I may give for every day  
Some good account at last.

#### The Child's Complaint

WHY should I love my sport so well,  
So constant at my play;  
And lose the thoughts of heaven and hell,  
And then forget to pray?

What do I read my Bible for,  
But, Lord, to learn thy will?  
And shall I daily know thee more,  
And less obey thee still?



How senseless is my hear, and wild!  
How vain are all my thoughts!  
Pity the weakness of a child,  
And pardon all my faults.

Make me thy heavenly voice to hear,  
And let me love to pray;  
Since God will lend a gracious ear  
To what a child can say.

### The Sluggard

'TIS the voice of the sluggard; I heard him complain,  
"You have waked me too soon, I must slumber again."  
As the door on its hinges, so he on his bed,  
Turns his sides, and his shoulders, and his heavy head.

"A little more sleep, and a little more slumber;"  
Thus he wastes half his days, and his hours without number:  
And when he gets up he sits folding his hands,  
Or walks about saunt'ring, or trifling he stands.

I pass'd by his garden, and saw the wild brier,  
The thorn and the thistle grow broader and higher:  
The clothes that hang on him are turning to rags;  
And his money still wastes, till he starves or he begs.

I made him a visit, still hoping to find  
He had took better care for improving his mind.  
He told me his dreams, talk'd of eating and drinking;  
But he scarce reads his Bible, and never loves thinking.

Said I then to my heart, "Here's a lesson for me,  
That man's but a picture of what I might be;  
But thanks to my friends for their care in my breeding,  
Who taught me betimes to love working and reading."

### Summer Evening

How fine has the day been! how bright was the sun!  
How lovely and joyful the course that he run!  
Though he rose in a mist when his race he begun,  
And there follow'd some droppings of rain:  
But now the fair traveller comes to the west,  
His rays are all gold, and his beauties are best;  
He paints the sky gay as he sinks to his rest,  
And foretells a bright rising again.

Just such is the Christian: his course he begins  
Like the sun in a mist, while he mourns for his sins,  
And melts into tears; then he breaks out and shines,  
And travels his heavenly way:





But when he comes nearer to finish his race,  
Like a fine setting sun, he looks richer in grace,  
And gives a sure hope at the end of his days,  
Of rising in brighter array.

( From Isaac Watts' Divine and Moral Songs for Children, London:  
George Routledge & Co., n.d. First published 1715.)

G

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR TOMMY TRIP, AND OF HIS DOG JOULER

Tommy Trip, the author of the following sheets, is the only son of Mr. William Trip, of Spittle Fields, London. He is but short in stature, and not much bigger than Tom Thumb but a great deal better, for he is a great scholar, and whenever you see him you will always find him with a book in his hand and his faithful dog Jouler by his side. Jouler serves him for a horse as well as a dog, and Tommy when he has a mind to ride, pulls a little bridle out of his pocket, whips it upon honest Jouler, and away he gallops -- tantivy. As he rides through the town he frequently stops at the doors to know how the little children do within, and if they are good and learn their books he then leaves an Apple, an Orange or a Plumb-cake at the door, and away he gallops again -- tantivy, tantivy, tantivy.

You have heard how he beat Woglog, the great Giant, I suppose, have you not? But lest you should not, I will tell you. As Tommy was walking through a meadow on a moon-light night, he heard a little boy cry, upon which he called Jouler, bridled him and galloped away to the place. When he came there he found Woglog with a little boy under his arm whom he was going to throw into the water. Little boys should never loiter about in the fields, nor even in the streets, after it is dark. However, as he had been a good boy in other respects little Trip was determined the giant should not hurt him; and therefore he called to him, "Here you great Giant, you Woglog, set down that little boy, or I'll make you dance like a pea on a tobacco pipe. Are you not ashamed to set your wit to a child?" Woglog turned round, attempted to seize little Trip between his finger and thumb and thought to have cracked him as one does a walnut, but just as his hand came to him, Jouler snapped at it and bit a piece of his thumb, which put the giant in so much pain that he let fall the little boy, who ran away. Little Trip then up'd with his whip and lashed Woglog till he laid down and roared like a town bull, and promised never to meddle with any little boys or girls again. After he had thus beat the great Giant, Trip put the little boy upon Jouler and carried him home to his father and mother, but upon the road he charged him to be a good boy





and to say his prayers and learn his book and do as his pappa and mamma bid him, which this little boy has done ever since; and so must all other little boys and girls, or nobody will love them.

Little Trip is not only a very agreeable companion and a great scholar, but is also allowed to be one of the best Poets of the age, and that even by the Poets themselves, which in my opinion is an incontestible proof of his superior abilities. For if he did not as much exceed those Gentry as Apollo does the Muses, they who seldom make confessions of this sort, would never give up the point in his favour. He has now by him several dramatic pieces which are not culled from other authors, as the custom is, but all originals and well adapted to the English stage; and the following song composed by him when he was very young will sufficiently prove his superiority in lyric poetry.

I

Three children sliding on the ice  
Upon a summer's day;  
As it fell out, they all fell in --  
The rest, they ran away.

II

Now had these children been at school,  
Or sliding on dry ground;  
Ten thousand pounds to one penny  
They had not all been drowned.

III

You parents who have children dear,  
And eke you that have none,  
If you would have them safe abroad  
Pray keep them all at home.

OF THE LION AND JACKAL

The Lion is commonly called the king of beasts . . . . The report of his being afraid of the crowing of a cock is found by experience to be entirely false. The Jackal is frequently called the lion's provider. It is said that when he seizes his prey, by his cries he gives notice to the lion, at whose sight he retires and when he has gone returns to eat what his master the lion has left.

OF THE LEOPARD

Few beasts can with the Leopard vie,  
His beauteous skin allures the eye,  
His form, like Vice, serves to decoy  
Those whom his nature would destroy.



OF THE RHINOCEROS

Should some fine lady view this beast  
His beauties ne'er could charm her,  
Oh, how unlike Sir Foplin dressed  
Appears this hog in armour.

OF THE FOX

So artful, so serious he looks and so sly  
At the goose when he casteth his eye on't,  
That he seems like a gamester intent on his die,  
Or a lawyer surveying his client.

The Fox is remarkable for his craft and subtilty. When he is troubled with fleas he is said to take a piece of wool in his mouth and going by slow steps into a river, the fleas, leaping by degrees to avoid the water, assemble in the wool; after staying for a moment with only his nose above stream, he lets it go and is immediately quit of his troublesome companions.

OF THE PORCUPINE

This creature shoots his pointed quills,  
And beasts destroys and men;  
But more the rav'nous lawyer kills  
With his half-quill the pen.

OF THE BISON OR WILD OX

The bison though neither  
Engaging nor young,  
Like a flatt'rer can lick  
You to death with his tongue.

The bison's tongue is long, hard and as rough as a file; with this alone he is said to be able to draw a man to him, and by only licking wound him to death. He smells like a musk cat; but though his flesh is in summer very fat it is too strong to be eaten.

( From A Pretty Book of Pictures for Little Masters and Misses: or, Tommy Trip's History of Beasts and Birds. With a familiar description of each in verse and prose. To which is prefixed the History of Little Tom himself, of his dog Jouler, and of Woglog the great Giant, 9th ed., London: Printed for J. Newbery, in St. Paul's Churchyard, 1752.

The excerpt appears in Andrew W. Tuer's Stories from Old-Fashioned Children's Books, London: Leadenhall Press, Ltd., 1899-1900, pp. 1-5.)











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